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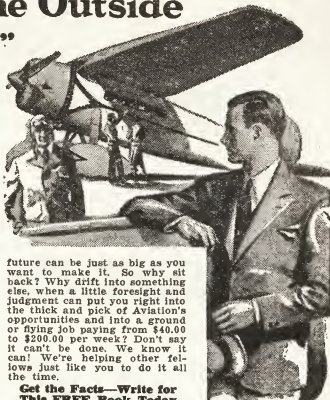
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375-W



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Vol. 10

FEBRUARY, 1931

No. 2

## Contents

*Cover Design by Dalton Stevens*

INCANTATION.....	Avis Furman	8
<i>Against her will she becomes a sorceress and suffers dire penalty</i>		
PRISONERS OF FEAR.....	Douglas M. Dold	20
<i>What a predicament—alive, yet he could not prove it!</i>		
THE TWELFTH MAN.....	Harold S. Corbin	30
<i>Under these terrible conditions he would rather have been the first man</i>		
WHERE NONE COULD LIVE.....	Arthur T. Jolliffe	40
<i>Here you learn what the deadly Sarsar means</i>		
THE HOUSE OF THE FOG.....	H. Thompson Rich	50
<i>Is it real or not, this place of impenetrable mystery?</i>		
CLUE OF THE BLUE BEAD.....	W. Harold Wilson	62
<i>When it rolls on the floor, it is the beginning of the end</i>		
THE CLOCK WITH THE LIVING FACE.....	Horace Leaf	70
<i>One of this famous ghost-layer's best true stories</i>		
WHEN LINCOLN SAW HIS OWN PHANTOM.....	Herbert Hall Taylor	77
<i>Psychic experiences of the Great Emancipator</i>		
THE WOLF IN THE DARK.....	J. Paul Suter	81
<i>Invisible Terror stalks into these two boys' lives</i>		
INSIDE SECRETS OF FALSE MEDIUMS AND THEIR MARVELS.....	Theo Annemann	89
<i>Concluding an exposé vital to all of us</i>		
THE EVIL THREE.....	Victor Rousseau	98
<i>The transplanted castle on the Hudson is besieged by Horror</i>		
SPIRIT TALES.....	Count Cagliostro	111
<i>"Conjure" again, and stones that weep</i>		
WERE YOU BORN IN FEBRUARY?.....	Stella King	115
<i>Your future as seen in the stars</i>		
THE MEETING PLACE.....		120
<i>Readers exchange their personal experiences with the supernatural</i>		

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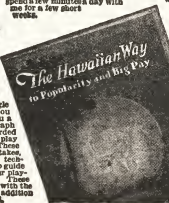
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20x18 1/2	\$22.49	28x18 1/2	\$24.99
20x19	\$22.49	28x19	\$24.99
20x19 1/2	\$22.49	28x19 1/2	\$24.99
20x20	\$22.49	28x20	\$24.99
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20x24	\$22.49	28x24	\$24.99
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"There is somebody  
who has harmed you?  
There is somebody  
you would like out of  
the way?"



# INCANTATION

**S**URELY a charm has not got the power of life and death! A few words, muttered in a mysterious fashion, cannot bring a man, far away, to his death! Even now, after the whole terrible business is over, I cannot, *cannot* believe it!

And yet, here I am, victim of that same charm, alone in the dreary mountains, waiting for the end. It is but just, I suppose. For if there really be power in those Latin words, then I am a thief and a murderer!

But it cannot be true! Over and over I repeat those words: it cannot, *cannot*



*"Yes, I would like to  
have Mr. Morrison  
King out of the way.  
And he might leave  
me his money before  
he goes!"*



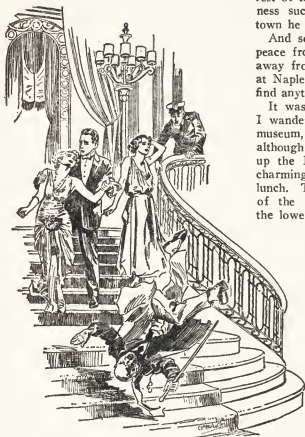
By  
ADIS FURMAN

*Against her real nature she became a sorceress,  
and what a trail of fear and horror she had to tread!*

be true! And yet, even as I say them, I am preparing the "charm" again—with a prayer of hope on my lips. It is for *him* I perform this dread rite—for his happiness. Will he ever know?

\* \* \*  
It all started with my trip to Europe

—one of those cruises so popular with students and teachers. I had just completed my course in normal school, and with the last few dollars left me in my father's will, I was taking this fling before settling down to a life of school teaching. And it was on this cruise that I met two



*Mr. King fell down the grand staircase and broke his neck*

people so important in my after-life—Lillian Sumner, and Morrison King.

Lillian was a pretty, vivacious girl. I became acquainted with her my first hour at sea; and before the day was over we were companions for the trip. I liked Lillian; but she was such an incessant talker that I often wearied of her and slipped away to be by myself. It was that desire to be free for a few hours from her (and Mr. King) that later brought on the terrible events I record.

Now, Mr. King, too, was a nice enough person. He was an extremely wealthy, gouty, old man who was taking the trip for his health. A self-made, self-sufficient man whom success had made a little insensitive. He had reached that age where a widower is apt to be sentimental about any pretty girl who happens to come along. Throughout our trip, to Gibraltar, Algiers, Genoa, he followed me around, part of the time making harmless love to me, the

rest of the time telling me about his business success and the large mid-Western town he had helped build up.

And so it was to have a few hours of peace from him and Lillian that I slipped away from the boat the moment it docked at Naples. . . And, God knows, I was to find anything but peace there!

It was a beautiful sunlit morning, and I wandered through the city, visiting the museum, glancing into the San Carlo—although there was no opera on—riding up the Posillippo where, overlooking the charming, glittering city below, I had my lunch. Then, returning again to the heart of the city, I started strolling through the lower quarters.

Hearing loud voices ahead of me as I walked through one of the narrow, twisting streets, I hurried my step until I reached the end of an even narrower alley. And there, about ten feet away from me, stood an old, old woman, crouching against the wall, one thin hand clutching her shawl protectively about her head. The other hand was raised to shield her face. For all around her stood a group of small boys, jeering at her and pelting her with stones.

"Old witch!" they screamed.

For a moment I stood still in indignation. Older passers-by did nothing to aid her. Indeed, most of them laughed, while some even encouraged her tormentors. And then, finally, a great hulking man threw a handful of pebbles in her face as he passed.

WITH a cry of rage, I darted forward.

There was a boy near me holding a switch, with which he beat the woman's skirts. Snatching it from his hand, I drew it back and swung it straight into the face of the big coward. Then I whirled around, whipping the boys unmercifully, right and left.

"Loafers!" I cried. "How dare you!"

They scattered with cries of pain. The passers-by stopped and looked on with wonder.

"Americana!" they whispered to one another, as if that explained everything.

I turned to the old woman. She, too, was looking at me with large wondering eyes; I suppose it never occurred to her

somebody might come to her rescue, least of all one of her own sex. She started to thank me in rapid Neapolitan, but I shook my head, smiling. I understood a little Italian, but I could not grasp this quick speech. And then her next words rather startled me.

"Do you speak Latin?" The question itself was worded in that language.

I answered yes; for I hoped to teach it upon my return to America. And as if Latin were her native tongue, the woman commenced to thank me.

"Come!" she finished, taking my hand; "you shall be rewarded for your kindness!"

I protested that I wanted no reward; that it would be a poor world indeed if everybody expected payment for every little deed of kindness. But she would not listen to me, and kept tugging at my fingers with her thin, trembling hand. And so, finally, rather than hurt her feelings, I let her lead me along.

We went down the narrow, dirty alley; into another, if possible narrower and dirtier. And at last we halted before a low basement door. The woman threw it open, stepped aside, and with the gesture of a queen inviting one to her palace, motioned me to enter. I passed through the door and felt my way down three dark steps.

The old woman hobbled after me, closing the door behind her, and thus threw the place into complete darkness. Soon, however, she lit a candle, and its faint flickering rays lighted the room a little.

In one corner was a heap of rags, probably the poor woman's bed. A table was in the center, and a couple of boxes served as chairs. There was a huge fireplace, in which a few coals smouldered, making the room oppressively hot.

"YOU think there is little here with which

I can reward your kindness?" she asked with a dry chuckle. "I shall reward you with something more than possessions," she continued in a low voice; "I shall give you the means whereby you yourself may reward the good for their goodness—and the evil for their wickedness!"

I gazed at her in astonishment as I sat on an upturned box. What did the old crone mean?

She crossed to the fireplace, removed a large earthen pot, and brought it back to set on the middle of the table. Then she

hobbled over to one corner, returning in a moment with an armful of assorted herbs and powders. These she carefully measured and threw into the pot.

"You will take down the names of these herbs and the correct amounts to put in," she told me as she proceeded. "When you leave, I shall give you some to take away with you." And I, delighted at what seemed a harmless but thrilling little incident, drew pencil and paper from my purse, and concealing my smile, solemnly noted down her directions.

I SHALL not give those directions here.

Oh, it all seems absurd, mad; and even after the series of startling, horrible events that I have gone through from that day to this, I cannot, even for a moment, believe that that mixture could bring such terrible calamities into the world.

The herbs and powders mixed, the woman took a coal from the fire and tossed it in the pot. There was a hiss and a bright flare. Then, slowly, a dense smoke rose from the bowl, curling in blue spirals, filling the room with a sickish aroma.

Bit by bit the room disappeared in the thick haze. The dim candle-lit walls vanished; the red glow in the fireplace became fainter and fainter, until finally the last spark died out. The smoke curled around the thin haggard face of the woman who leaned over the bowl; the last I saw were the two trembling hands extended over the pot, the two bright eyes that never wavered from mine. Suddenly they vanished; and only a thin hazy light showed where the candle burned. There was a moment's impressive silence.

"There is somebody who has harmed you?" Her voice was low, hoarse; I could scarcely recognize it. "There is somebody you would like out of the way?"

Why did she put it in those words? Certainly there was nobody in the world I wished dead; but as certainly there was somebody I wished "out of the way." My trip would become much pleasanter if I saw no more of Mr. King!

With a smile—for it seemed to me a thrilling game—I nodded. "Yes, I would love to have Mr. Morrison King out of the way. And," I added, with a laugh, "he might leave me his money before he goes!"

Again there fell a silence. Thicker than ever the smoke swirled upward to fill the

---

**"I shall give you the means whereby you yourself may reward the good for their goodness—and the evil for their wickedness!"**

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room. For some reason I commenced to feel slightly uneasy. Then, out of the smoke-filled darkness, rose a low chant.

If I refused to divulge the contents of that pot, how much more unwilling I would be to repeat those terrible words. I cannot believe in the power of mere words to work a spell for good or for evil. But I have come to the conclusion that the real power lay in an *involuntary faith* I had, for the moment. Latin lends itself, better than any other language, to sharp, terse speech; and so sharp, so horrible, were these words that came droning to me out of the darkness, that I could not help but shudder. And, as I say, for the moment I could not help but believe in their power. Could not that belief, mine and the old woman's, have been powerful enough to bring about the amazing tragedy that followed—as well as the horrors and sorrows that were to hound me through my life from then on?

*Or, in the face of all reason, can there be a real, fiendish current, flowing through life, ready to lift its evil head at the command of some foul incantation?*

The voice ceased; the formal words were over. Then, hoarsely, she whispered:

"Repeat this after me:

"And may he die; and may he bequeath to me all his goods, his chattels, and his monies."

I caught my breath. Then, somewhere within me, a voice told me not to be stupid. This was all a game, it said, and to please the old woman, I should finish it, and then go away. And so, in slightly husky tones, I repeated those portentous words:

"And may he die; and may he bequeath to me all his goods, his chattels, and his monies."

**L**ILLIAN SUMNER met me as I was making my way through the dusk toward the boat. At first, she was a little sulky because of my having slipped away from her to see the town by myself. But before I was half-way through with the amazing tale of my encounter with the "witch," she had forgotten her anger in astonishment.

"Why, I can't believe it!" she cried as, mounting the gang-plank, I finished with my account of the solemn curse laid upon the old man whose continued pursuit of myself had been the subject of much merriment. "It's the finest story I've heard in years!" Just then a figure loomed out of the darkness of the deck. "Here's Miss French!" Lillian cried. "Wait till we tell her!"

**B**UT Lillian did not have a chance to recount the great joke. Miss French herself was bursting with news.

"Have you heard?" she demanded as we came up to her side.

"What?" we both demanded at once.

"About Mr. King!"

My heart jumped.

"What about him?" I asked.

"Why," she explained, "he fell down the grand staircase this afternoon and broke his neck! He died within an hour afterwards!"

I was stunned. In the silence that followed, I felt Lillian slowly turn and gaze at me. And at that moment a tall man approached us.

"Miss Furman?" It was the captain of the ship. "I have been looking for you," he said. "Will you kindly come with me?"

Without a word I mechanically followed him down the deck to a large cabin. When we stepped inside, I made out four or five men standing around, talking in low voices, while on the bed lay the figure of a man completely covered with a sheet. The men turned as we entered.

"Mr. Branchard," said the captain in a quiet voice, "this is Miss Furman."

A kindly old man stepped up to me and bowed.

"How do you do, Miss Furman," he said. "I asked the captain to bring you here simply to explain that, fortunately, I was on board during Mr. King's unhappy accident, and could be at his side till his death."

I stared at him, not understanding.

"Fortunately?" I repeated.

"Yes, Miss Furman. I am a lawyer,

of the firm of Branchard, Holt & Branchard, and therefore could supervise Mr. King's last testament. You see, Miss Furman," he concluded, "Mr. King has bequeathed everything he owned to you—all his goods, his chattels, and his monies, as he quaintly put it."

A moment longer I stared at him. Then, slowly, darkness crept before my eyes, and my head started reeling.

The captain caught me as I fell.

\* \* \*

I MOVED into the King house—or rather mansion—upon my return to America. It was a veritable palace, set high on a beautiful hill, overlooking the large and growing mid-Western city that poor Mr. King had helped so much to build. I was living in a home that many a millionaire might have been glad to own; and yet I lived in utmost simplicity. For I felt an intruder, one who was living on money not her own.

Immediately upon my arrival in Amer-

heirs; nobody, I was sure, would believe I would be willing to surrender this great property, and until the day came when I could prove my willingness, I decided to keep it all a secret.

Meanwhile I entered, to a slight degree, the social life of the town, going to dinners, dances, and other amusements. The result was a gay and fairly happy life; and much as I liked most of the young men, I considered none of them seriously—until I met Bob Cowley.

I shall never forget that first meeting—the meeting that was to bring me so much exquisite happiness, and so much unbelievable horror. A Mrs. Shirleigh phoned me to invite me to dinner that night to meet him.

"He says he saw you in the street the other day," she told me, "and he was so impressed he could scarcely wait to meet you."

"Impressed with me—or the fortune I'm supposed to possess?" I asked with a laugh. But Mrs. Shirleigh was serious.

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## Can there be a real, fiendish current, flowing through life, ready to lift its evil head at the command of some foul incantation?

---

ica, I instituted a search for the heir or heirs of the dead man. I found that one son existed—or had, at least, once existed. Years before, Mr. King had been divorced from his wife, and a son of six or seven had gone East with her to live. Nothing had been heard of either since then, and all my efforts to trace them were useless. But still I kept up the search.

That, indeed, was by far my largest expenditure from the vast estate. Beside the money spent that way, I only paid an old caretaker and his wife.

It did not take long, of course, for the news to spread around town as to how I got the property, although the story was distorted. The general theory, I believe, was that Mr. King and I were engaged to be married at the time of his death. Nor did I deceive them; I had no wish for the vile tale of the "witch" to be known—even though I told myself, over and over, that there could not possibly have been any power to the charm, that it was all just a terrible coincidence. I also said nothing about my attempts to find the true

"I really don't think he's that kind of a chap, Miss Furman," she replied. "Of course I know little about him. But he seems an honest, clean-cut young man. And he certainly is handsome!"

And he was handsome—to me, anyhow. As he sat across the table from me that night, tall, light, with clean-cut features and that wide, humorous smile of his, I felt drawn to him as I had never before been drawn to a man.

AND he, on his part, seemed attracted to me. Throughout the meal he spoke to the others only when absolute politeness demanded it; the rest of the time he directed his remarks—and his eyes—to me. After the meal, he immediately steered me into a corner, and before the evening was over, we were fast friends. The next afternoon, at my invitation, he appeared at my house for tea.

And so began days of happiness such as I had never before known. Day after day he would call. And we would talk; of what, I could never afterwards tell. I know only I was thrilled by every word he

said. And every time his clear blue eyes caught my glance, a wave of warm ecstasy would pass over me. For I was in love.

And so, I told myself, was he. Only one thing ever made me question it—even, sometimes, making me slightly uneasy—his eyes!

Clear and honest though they were, every now and then I would catch them upon me in a curious, speculative fashion. Immediately when I caught his glance, he would woo me with more ardor than ever; but for all that, the memory of that glance would last some time to make me uneasy.

**W**HAT did it mean? Surely he was honest in his attentions to me! No man, with such an open countenance, could be attentive to a girl just for the money he supposed she had! For I had never confided in him that I was rich, not really, and he never asked me questions.

And thus the summer passed, and fall set in; and then came that first evening of evil memory . . . when the dead past rose up to taunt me in my present happiness.

I remember it was windy that day, and warmly bundled up, Bob and I took a long walk through the hills, riotous in color, with the exhilarating wind blowing against our cheeks and sending the dead leaves to dance and swirl all about us. Then we returned home, and drank hot tea in the old library before a roaring fire.

Bob stayed to dinner and after it was over we sat drinking our coffee in the library before the flames. The wind tore around the house, in a frenzy now, blowing shutters and rattling the panes. Bob's hand stole over mine, and we sat side by side in silence, gazing into the burning logs. I remember how cozy it was. I remember thinking I had never before been so happy, that such happiness as this was too wonderful to be true.

Was that intuition? Could I possibly have known, down deep, that I was right then on the brink of an unbelievable horror?

Listening to the wind, I set down my cup and looked at Bob with a smile.

"On such a night as this the evil spirits must be abroad," I murmured.

Bob glanced quickly up.

"You say that almost as if you believed in them," he laughed. "Have you ever believed in such things, in ghosts, or spirits—or charms?"

I started. Through the voice of my beloved an ugly word had risen from the past.

"No, no!" I cried hastily. "I—I couldn't believe in such nonsense!"

And now he gazed at me curiously.

"And yet," he said slowly, "your very vehemence in denying sounds a little false. Have you ever had any experience—with charms, say?"

I started again to answer no; and then I hesitated. Despite my assuring myself, over and over, that the death of Mr. King was only an amazing coincidence, the uneasy memory of the old woman's "curse" always haunted me even in my happy moments with Bob. And now, suddenly, I had an overwhelming desire to confide in somebody—in him!

"Yes," I said, "I have."

He slapped his knee with delight. "Good!" he cried. "Then let's try it! What could be a more appropriate night for it than this?"

But I swung around, clutching his knee. "No! no!" I gasped.

He turned to me, regarding me with wide, wondering eyes. "Why, Avis!" he exclaimed. "Surely you don't really believe in that nonsense? Come," he added, as I lowered my eyes in shame, "if you really do have any foolish notions about such things, now is the time to prove to yourself how wrong you are!"

Again I hesitated. Perhaps he was right; perhaps if I tried the "charm" once again and realized how powerless it was, I would be relieved forever of this haunting uneasiness! Suddenly I jumped up, and without a word went to my room where in the bottom of my trunk I dug up the herbs and powders that had lain there ever since I left Naples. And in a few moments I was back in the library sorting them out on a bare table.

**T**HERE was a brass bowl on the mantel.

Bringing this over to the table, I measured out the ingredients in it. Then, extinguishing the lights, until only the flickering glow of the fire played along the walls, I raised my eyes to Bob, who had taken a seat across the table and was watching me with silent interest.

"You are to make a wish," I said, and somehow my voice was hoarse. "You are to make a wish concerning somebody, a wish for good to befall them—or evil."



For a moment he was silent. Then, slowly, he spoke. "I wish that a certain woman would fall ill," he said, "that she would suffer long, and then die."

I raised my hand in horrified protest.

"No! No!" I cried. "You *can't* wish that!"

But Bob only looked up at me with his curious wide smile.

"That was a wish carefully calculated to startle you," he replied. "If I made some little Pollyanna wish, you would not hesitate to perform it. But a wish like this is a test of how much you really believe this stuff. And surely a girl I—I love—" He looked up at me with great solemn eyes. "Surely she can't believe in such truck!"

And I, once more ashamed that he should possibly have reason to be contemptuous of me, lit a match and tossed it into the bowl.

"You will concentrate upon this woman until the end," I told him in a low voice.

**A**FTER the first flare and hiss, the smoke slowly rose, as it had in that den, back in Naples. It rose in thick spirals, deep blue, that covered the ceiling and bit by bit hid the walls. It lowered in a thickening haze between my beloved and myself; and while I held my palms outstretched over the bowl, I saw his blue eyes, intently watching me; until at last they disappeared, and only the glow from the fireplace permeated the deep fog. Then, in a low voice, I began the horrible Latin chant.

The chant ended. There was a moment's intense silence. I could neither hear nor see the man who sat opposite me. Then clearing my throat, I spoke.

"Repeat these words after me," I said.

"May she fall ill; may she suffer a lingering illness . . . and then die. . . ."

A moment's pause. Then, out of the darkness: "May she fall ill; may she suffer

a lingering illness . . . and then die. . . ."

That night after Bob went home I slowly mounted the stairs to my room. More and more, as the hours passed, I had become conscience stricken. Supposing, by some horrible chance the charm should work? I threw myself on my bed.

"But it couldn't work, it couldn't!" I whispered to myself. "It's madness to believe it!" Surely I would never have dreamed of attempting it had there been the slightest chance it might harm some innocent, unsuspecting person!

And then, deep down within me, as I lay there gazing up at the ceiling another voice spoke.

"Are you so convinced of its harmlessness," said that voice, "that you would be willing to try it against yourself?"

"**YES,**" I cried aloud in answer, "a thousand times, yes!"

"Would you," went on that relentless voice, "be willing to offer the greatest sacrifice as proof—your life?"

And then I rose to my feet.

"The greatest sacrifice," I told my conscience, "is not my life. I am will-

ing to offer a greater one, to prove that this charm cannot have power!" And crossing to the door, I went out to the hall and down the great staircase to the floor below.

The fire still burned dimly in the library hearth. Switching on the lights, I crossed to the table, on which still stood the brass pot, along with the herbs and powders.

I divided the latter into two equal parts. One half I placed in the bowl, leaving enough for one more "charm." Then, switching off the lights, I struck a match, and tossed it inside.

Everything happened as before. I waited until I was lost in the dense haze. Then, aloud, my low voice reverberating in the silence of the large room, I repeated the terrible formula of the "charm."



As my last words died away, I sat a moment, very still, gathering courage. And then, slowly but clearly, I spoke these words: "And if this charm have any power at all may he learn to love the girl he cursed with all his heart, and soul and body!"

And then I dropped my head in my hands, sobbing as if my heart would break.

But the days passed and nothing happened. I forgot my fears. As a matter of fact, Bob, instead of showing less affection for me, as he must, I believed, if my last "charm" worked, became more ardent than ever. Gone was that curious look I had sometimes caught in his eyes, which now held only affection for me.

WE never mentioned the night of necromancy to each other. For my part, I wanted to drop it from my memory, and I imagined he was equally ashamed of his foolish little role in the business.

And I was content in his love. Content? The word scarcely expresses the deep happiness I felt during that gorgeous autumn. Sometimes, when alone, I felt so happy I could hardly stand it, and I would cry for pure joy.

At last came the day that I shamelessly admit to having looked forward to since first I met this man I loved. I remember that despite the lateness of the season it was quite warm, and we sat side by side, as usual, on the terrace. I was wrapped up to protect me from a little cough that had been troubling me recently—a cough that seemed to bother Bob much more than it warranted.

"Are you sure you are all right?" he would ask me, over and over. "Are you sure you shouldn't visit the doctor, Avis?"

And I, pleased by his solicitude, yet a bit surprised that my little cough should worry him so, would answer that there was nothing the matter.

We sat up on the terrace, gazing silently down into the city. All at once I felt his fingers close to my hand, felt him lift it gently until his lips were pressed against the back. And as suddenly he flung my hand from him and jumped to his feet. I gazed up at him, hurt and surprised.

"What is it, Bob?" I asked, while he turned his head away from me. "Have—have I done something?"

He swung around at that. His eyes were flashing.

"Yes," he cried, "you *have* done some-

thing! You have made me love you better than anything in the world—and in heaven, too, I think! You have made me realize I am the lowest cad on the earth! I love you!" He said it almost threateningly. "You understand? I love you, love you . . . and—" His head dropped; his last words were low and heavy. "And I have no right to tell you so."

And now my heart beat high. I thought I understood. I reached gently for his hand.

"You think you have no right," I said softly, "because I am rich—" He snatched his hand from mine, turned sharply away, at that. "And because perhaps—perhaps you have not so much money? Is that it, Bob?"

I waited, but he did not answer or turn; and then I went on.

"Then do not let that worry you," I said, "for listen to this, Bob." I stood up, resting my hand on his shoulder. "I am not rich. Despite appearances, I am probably far poorer than you. All this vast estate, that an old man willed to me in a moment's madness before his death, I am holding, waiting to find the natural heir or heirs. Practically the only money I spend of the estate is upon a world-wide search for those heirs. Now do you see, Bob?" I finished, "why you should not be afraid to—"

And then I stopped. Bob had turned, and was listening with eyes wide with wonder, horror, it almost seemed.

"You are giving it up?" he whispered. "You do not consider this property your own?"

It was my turn to be surprised. "No, Bob," I said, gravely, "this is not my property. Does that—does that make a difference?"

THERE was a wild look in his eyes now.

He did not seem to understand what I was saying. And for my part, my heart sank. Surely I had not been mistaken in this man I loved! Surely those clear eyes could not be the eyes of a fortune-hunter! Suddenly he laughed, a wild, heart-breaking laugh.

"Does it make a difference?" He repeated my words like a man in despair.

"Does it make a difference!"

And then I knew my fears were unjust. Something—something very terrible—was troubling him; but it was not the fact that I was practically penniless. I reached for his hand.

"I am waiting, Bob," I said very softly. He turned to me, as if not understanding.

"I am waiting," I repeated; and then, when he did not speak: "Bob," I said, in a low voice, "will you marry me?"

And with that he dropped to his knees and pressing both my hands against his cheeks until he almost hurt them, he broke into the most terrible, tearless sobs I have ever heard.

**W**E planned to marry in two weeks. It was to be a quiet affair, absolutely secret, in fact, to take place in a little church beyond the city. Then we were going South on our honeymoon. I remember how Bob brought maps to the house, and we sat, excited as two children, poring over them. We would go down to New Orleans, and then take a boat to the many little romantic ports in the Caribbean. Oh, it would be a wonderful two months, and we lived it over, night after night!

Never once, after that evening on the terrace, did we mention our conversation there. I knew that in due time Bob would tell me what was troubling him; for something *was* bothering him; for several days afterwards there was a continued look of pain and anxiety on his face, particularly when he looked at me. And over and over he questioned me concerning my health. However, as the days passed and I continued to reassure him, the strained look began to disappear.

But, though I did reassure him, I had less and less reason to as the days went on. For my cough, at first just slightly annoying, was becoming extremely painful. Every night I lay awake (after the first week of our engagement I scarcely got a moment's sleep), and I would cough and cough until I was too weak even to sit up. Before Bob, however, I disguised it as best I could, continually taking cough palliatives and hiding the drawn look on my face that was becoming more pronounced by the use of various cosmetics. And then came the morning before our wedding day, and wak-

ing up with a spasm of coughing, I looked at my handkerchief—and understood.

I remember I phoned Bob after breakfast. He was to have come over to spend the whole day—we had so much to talk about, concerning our plans that would commence on the morrow! Making some excuse, I put him off till tea time. Then I dressed, got in the car, and rode down town to the doctor's.

The moment he saw me, his eyes filled with shocked surprise. It did not take long to make an examination, and when he was finished he looked up at me with sudden anger.

"Why didn't you come to me months ago, Miss Furman?" he demanded. "Why did you put it off till now?"

"Months ago?" I repeated, staring at him. "But I had the first signs of a cough only two or three weeks ago!"

**I**T was his turn to stare at me, incredulous. Then, slowly, he nodded.

"It has been known to progress that rapidly," he grudgingly agreed, "but very, very rarely."

"Then—it is some-

thing—quite serious?"

He watched me a moment before replying. "Miss Furman," he said at last, "can you stand the truth?"

I tried to smile. "I think so," I replied.

But he did not return my smile. "You have got tuberculosis in—" He hesitated.

"Yes?"

"—in its final stages."

For a minute we gazed into each other's eyes. I wet my lips.

"I'm glad—to know it—to-day," I said finally in a low voice.

"To-day?" He was puzzled.

Again I tried to smile. "I was to be married to-morrow," I explained.

The doctor lowered his eyes. When finally he raised them he did not speak. There was nothing to be said. He simply extended his hand.

I shook it, bowed, and went out.

## **You Will Meet The Man With the Four Arms**

*in the March issue of  
GHOST STORIES  
on sale February 20th  
at all news stands*

**Don't miss this  
IMPORTANT  
APPOINTMENT**

And then, when I got home, I sat down to wait for the hardest moment of all—the moment of Bob's coming, when I must tell him. The hours passed, hours of agony such as I have never known . . . and at last I heard his light step on the porch. In a moment he was inside, and flinging his hat on a chair, he strode over to me.

"Well, honey girl," he cried, stooping over to kiss me, "how is Miss Furman this afternoon? Notice," he added, with a laugh, "how careful I am to say 'Miss Furman'; for in twenty-four hours that name will be lost to you forever!" And again he laughed that exhilarated, boyish laugh of his. How hard he was making it for me!

**B**UT I knew I must speak now, or perhaps lose the courage to speak. "I'm afraid you are wrong, Bob," I told him. "I'm afraid I will be Miss Furman longer than twenty-four hours—though perhaps not so very much longer."

He stared at me, not understanding. "You mean—you are putting the marriage off?" he cried.

"Not putting it off, Bob. I—I—" Then I had to look away when I said it. "I shall never marry you—or anybody else."

"Never marry me?" He breathed the words.

I looked up, managing a half-hearted smile. "You see, Bob," I said, "I have tuberculosis in its last stages."

A look of horror that almost frightened me appeared on his face, and he sank to his knees, burying his face in the other side of the divan on which I sat.

"God have mercy on me!" he whispered hoarsely. "Oh, God have mercy upon me!"

I think I smiled, rather ruefully, at that. How like a man, I thought, to think only of his own misfortune.

"Perhaps," I chided him gently, "you might ask God to have mercy on me, too."

He looked up at that, not understanding. Then, suddenly, he broke into a harsh laugh.

"Have mercy on *you*?" he repeated.

"Why should I ask mercy for a saint, when I am so vile, so—so—" His voice sank. "There is no word terrible enough," he said.

Surprised, I laid my hand on his head. "But what have *you* done, Bob?" I asked.

He looked up quickly. "What have I done?" he cried. "It is I who have brought this on you! Yes it is!" he in-

sisted when I started to deny it. "Do you remember the night I asked you to—to curse a certain woman?" And when I nodded: "Well," he breathed, and there was a terrible fear in his eyes as they looked up into mine, "*you were that woman.*"

I drew back in sudden horror; and at that he laughed more harshly than ever.

"That's right!" he cried. "Hate me! Loathe me! O God, if only you would kill me!"

"But why, Bob?" I asked, when I could speak. "Why did you want me to—to die this terrible death?"

"Because I hated you! Because I had sworn to do it! Oh, don't you see? My name isn't Bob Cowley, it's Bob King! Don't you understand? Don't you understand? *I am the son of Morrison King, the man who left you this property!*"

And then, after a long horrified silence, he commenced to explain in a low voice. By chance he had met Lillian Sumner, the one person who knew the secret of the "charm," and she had told him about it. Whereupon he had sworn vengeance, and had come here with the purpose of meeting me and carrying it out.

"Common sense told me the 'charm' had no power," he said, "but I decided to try it out. Somehow I would make you work it against yourself. If the 'charm' had no power to hurt you, then you had not hurt my father with it. But if, on the other hand, it *had* somehow worked against him, then it would work against you and revenge him."

"And," said I, in a weak voice, "he is revenged."

But Bob's eyes flared. "No, no!" he cried. "You did not mean it! Didn't you tell me yourself you were hoping to find the rightful owner of this property? I saw your true self then, Avis, and I would have killed myself to take back that curse!" He hid his face for a moment in his hands; and then slowly he looked up with pleading eyes.

**A**VIS," he whispered, "I know I have no right to ask you to forgive, much less forget. But—but will you let me marry you? Will you let me go with you, wherever you must go; to live with you, and—and die with you, if you are to die?"

I smiled, a bit wistfully. "After all the hate you had for me?" I asked.

"No, no!" he insisted. "I never really

hated you, after I saw you! I really loved you that first day, though I fought against it and pretended to myself I didn't. I—I thought I hated you till the very night you performed that curse; and then, going home, I suddenly realized I was wrong. I suddenly realized I loved you with all my heart, and soul, and body!"

Suddenly, a terrible pain shot through me. I jumped up, laughing hysterically.

"You think your hate is evil!" I cried, looking at him as he knelt there. "But I will tell you something far, far more evil than your hate—your love!"

He drew back, as if I had struck him. "No," he whispered, "not that! Don't say that!"

But I was still laughing, laughing till the tears rolled down my cheeks.

"*With all your heart, and soul, and body!*" I repeated. "Those were my words. Those were the words I used that night after you left, Bob, when, my conscience troubling me, I worked the 'charm' again. If the first 'charm' succeeded, you were to learn to love the woman you cursed—with all your heart, and soul and body!" I stopped; looked down at him. "Now do you see why your love for me is more vile even than your hate?"

For a moment he did not move. A man who has been stabbed by one he loves must look as he did. Slowly he rose to his feet.

He dragged himself across the room; took up his hat. At the threshold he turned.

I shall never forget the tragic eyes that gazed at me. He knew he was seeing me for the last time in this life. But he did not speak. He turned, went out the door, out of my sight forever.

I heard his footsteps descending the outer stairs and die away down the walk. I listened, straining my ears for the last sound, kneeling the while where he knelt, resting my cheek against the back of the

sofa which was still warm from his cheek.

And here in my little cell in the mountains, I wait the end. They tell me it won't be long now, and I am glad of that. For my heart is tired as I sit by the window, hour after hour, day after day, looking across the mountains toward the East, wondering what he is doing now . . . asking myself, is he, perhaps, thinking of me?

And I ask myself, too, what terrible force did I evoke to ruin two lives besides my own?

Who can say? Perhaps some day the answer will be found; but long before that—very, very soon, in fact—I shall be at rest.

AND meanwhile, before that hour comes,

I have one more duty to perform, and then I shall be ready. From my trunk I have taken the powders and herbs, all that remains of the old woman's sinister gift; and I have put them in a small pot, struck a match, and dropped it inside.

It hisses and flares; then, slowly, the smoke curls up. My hands tremble a bit as I hold them, palms downward, over the top, and my eyes turn toward the small window facing the east that darkens in the twilight.

Soon the smoke hides that, hides the whole world from my gaze; and now I start, in a low, clear voice, those terrible words. It is the last time they shall ever be spoken, unless the old Italian woman still lives.

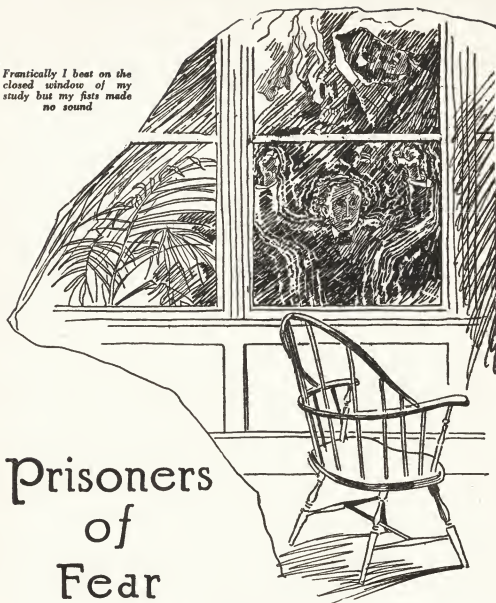
The Latin words are ended. And now comes the plea. I find my voice is a little tremulous; but I am glad, really and truly glad, to make this plea to that *something* that watches over me in the darkness of my smoke-filled empty room.

"May he find another whom he can love, and who loves him . . . and may he forget me . . . and be happy forever, and ever, and ever. . . ."

*To the Reader: Would you have ended this story differently? How? Was Avis too self-sacrificing, and could she have used the charm for her own happiness with justice? What do you think? Let us hear your ideas on the subject.*



*Frantically I beat on the  
closed window of my  
study but my fists made  
no sound*



# Prisoners of Fear

By DOUGLAS M. DOLD

## HIS STORY

**I**T WAS so ridiculously simple. Stupendous truths usually are after they are fully comprehended.

As I hovered above my body, my mind was filled with the joy of accomplishment. Success beyond my wildest dreams had crowned my persistent experiments. The mere thought of the terrific potentialities, the revolutionary character of my discovery, made me thrill with a gratified sense of superhuman power. For

was not I, Henry Corner, superhuman? Was not I an invisible essence comprising what men call the spirit?

There below me, proving it, lay my husk. How pale and still a thing it was! Men would call it dead. Yet I knew it was simply deserted, and that I was going to return to it shortly, in order that I might use it as my base of operations. For I had no wish to leave permanently my warm and kindly human life. I was an engaged man, very much in love.



*Not a story for midnight reading unless you want  
goose-flesh all over you and your spine turned into an icicle—*



*Emily's father  
seized her, calling  
her to be sane . . .  
she struggled; she  
fought*

Hesitating there in the room with my body, I thought what trivial things determine cataclysmic and revolutionary changes. If it had not been for a chance juxtaposition of two common synthetic compounds which every one knows, together with the discovery of the true function of the cells of Purkinje, plus an unusual use and application of the sinusoidal current, none of the wonders I was gazing at would ever have been possible.

Who would have even suggested such

an hypothesis? That the cerebellum with its arbor vitae instead of the cerebrum should be the determining factor! Seven months ago, even I, a cold, matter-of-fact pathologist, would have scoffed as much as anyone. And yet, to-day— Well, a chance series of investigations having to do with amino acids, had provided me with the first clue, the other work had followed, and now here I was.

Now I knew! As I hung there in my quiet study, above the husk, I began to

grow quieter presently, and took up the task of tabulating and docketing my sensations, my feelings, sense by sense.

In the first place, I felt like my normal self as to size and shape. But as to my orientation and position in space—the medium in which I found myself felt more like a fluid of very thin consistency than air. In this medium I floated, much as I had seen goldfish floating in a globe.

**T**HERE was a slight sensation of chilliness. To my ears came a ceaseless, crackling, buzzing sound, which at that time I did not understand. Of all the senses my vision seemed most affected by the change, for I found that although, when I looked at an object, I saw its surface outlines just as any mortal would, if I continued looking, my gaze penetrated the object in a very singular way.

For instance, looking down on my own body, I saw the slight, average sized man whom many knew, and I noted in myself the resemblance to Edgar Allan Poe of which I had been so often told. Then, as my gaze kept right on, I saw, to my shock, first my eyes through the lids, the teeth behind the lips, then the brain, muscles and blood vessels, and finally the floor beneath the sofa on which my body was lying.

Having floated down to the table, I attempted to write, but found I had no power to do so. After a moment I looked up, saw a picture of Emily, and thought how proud she would be of me because I could command two worlds.

The exploring idea hit me, and proved fascinating. I drifted over to the door but found I could not open it. This annoyed me. But then I realized that the windows were open, and had little difficulty in floating through one, out of the study.

Few know the exaltation of the explorer—and God knows I was an explorer—in another dimension.

At first, as I stood on the sill of my second-story laboratory and study, I experienced both a rather silly fear of falling, and the still sillier fear of being seen by people in the street before my house. In a second, however, I knew that I was invisible, and that no bodily dangers could affect me. After that my self-consciousness was not long in giving way to curiosity and amazement.

For, from the narrow margin of my window sill, I faced Broad Street and saw visions so gloriously beautiful that no words at my command can, with any justice, describe them.

Down that street, blended with the drab colors and commonplace sights with which I had been familiar all my life, were incandescent hues which my retina hardly accepted. There were sounds which I seemed to *see* as well as hear, because when I closed my eyes and listened, I saw pictures, and when I stopped my ears and looked, I heard sounds. Then, remembering that I was not visible to humanity, I swam off my window sill into the ether.

To my new senses, the outside air was not the homogeneous, transparent substance I had been used to, but was made up of myriads of impalpable thread-like filaments, through which I seemed to float without disturbing their continuity.

All along and amongst these filaments, crackling and buzzing in regular rhythmic waves not unpleasant to hear, flowed ceaseless streams of small, lambent sparks. And my awareness of these filled me with an intense excitement.

I must float out, see more, go further!

Eagerly I drifted away, though just once, dominated by curiosity, I glanced back at my house.

It was at that moment that I became aware of the newest and most impressive phenomena I had yet witnessed. For as I looked, I saw that all about the house were gathered invisible ones like myself, only, unlike myself, the figures that appeared were the spirits of the real departed!

**I** DID not turn back to these, as was my impulse at first, for I had hardly become aware of them when I found still other spirit figures floating suddenly on all sides of me. A queer sensation gripped me for the moment—not fear exactly—and then I seemed to know that the thing I was witnessing was simply the normal, logical thing in the circumstances.

It was not until I had tried to speak to the nearer spirits, and found that they would have nothing to do with me, that the first feeling of naturalness went away and I became disturbed.

They would not talk to me! Some feeling which approached and surpassed earthly fear touched me for a flash. I

stopped and thought over what I should do.

As a result of the decision I reached, I forced myself on one old patriarch whom I recognized as the Reverend Doctor Fielding, who had died two years ago. I spoke to him quietly, and expressed joy at having found him once again, in a new life. But the words were no more than off my lips when Dr. Fielding turned on me in savage recognition, so unlike his former affectionate manner with me, and curtly pointed me back to my house. That was all. It was his warning and his threat.

How I wish I had heeded his mandatory gesture while there was still time!

As it was, rebuffed and ordered back, I was half-inclined to obey for a second, and should have done so had not the enormous exaltation and curiosity which had gripped me during my first moment in the spirit world, returned now. I knew that other spirits were crowding in ever greater numbers about me and about my house.

I knew that they were angry with me. And again I felt the premonition of disaster.

But curiosity rose up and flooded over me, and I became helpless before its urge. And suddenly I turned aside from the crowding spirits as well as I could, and floated away that I might be free to explore!

**F**OR the moment, I was allowed to go on in peace, and presently, as I floated by the bronze statue of General Lee in the town square, almost all thought of the hostile ones was driven from my mind because of a new wonder which came. My first impression of the statue was the usual one. Then, as I concentrated on the object, I saw that the metal was a mass of movement, that the whole thing was pulsing with energy and life; and I knew I was the first human ever to witness molecular and atomic movement.

I went on. And time passed, and one marvel was revealed to me after another. In the few short hours during which I was permitted to explore, I saw incalculable wonders. But not enough to

repay me for the misery which ensued!

Presently, my knowledge of earthly conditions told me that twilight was approaching, and I knew that I must return home before I should be missed—my body discovered—by my aunt, Mrs. Holderness, who kept house for me. So I made ready to float back. And then I began to understand.

**T**HE first thing I felt was that returning was not going to be easy. Some force seemed to be exerting itself against me. I had wandered across the James River, and the distance from the point at which I found myself to my house was, I calculated, about six miles. Six miles! And

I had no sooner turned to cover the distance than I knew force was against me.

Suddenly, darkness gained, and suddenly evil lurked everywhere. I no longer saw the beautiful hues. Nor felt superhuman sensations. I was

small and in peril. And then the night became filled with evil, flickering faces, lit by a fluorescent kind of glow.

Desperately I battled against the force. It was like breasting a strong current, with unknown dangers all about.

I could still see the city. But the kindly spirit land had vanished. I was in an evil country, where harm was meant me; and suddenly, in forlorn alarm, I understood why.

As an anarchist breaks the laws of orderly nations, I had broken the laws of earth. I had ignored the code whereby man is held down to human interests until he is forever done with earth! Such successes as mine would bring chaos into mortality. Who would be satisfied with the constricted powers of the body, if at will he could take up the unrestricted powers of the next plane of existence?

Too late, I was aroused into an intelligent appreciation of why kindly old Dr. Fielding had ordered me back to my house and corporeal form. Too late, I understood why the undead of the dark realm I had entered had been loosed against me. Incompassionate, envenomed, they were

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**As I hung there in my quiet study  
above my body I took up the task  
of tabulating and docketing my  
sensations, sense by sense**

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*At the sanitarium  
I found her under  
restraint, tied down,  
raving*

at my shoulder; their numbers were growing momentarily.

I do not know how long it took me—fighting all the ranks of the undead who stood in my path, fighting my own growing terror—to get back to the city. Judged by the standards of finite time, the terrific passage must have consumed hours. For I was exhausted when at last I drifted once more over Broad Street, and presently saw Staunton, the night editor of the *Leader*, going home. Yet somehow I *did* win that far, and for a moment, as I looked into Staunton's familiar face, I felt relief.

But that relief was not long in deserting me.

My first, natural action was to clutch at Staunton, to call out, imploring him to help me. It was when he paid no attention that the one last hope vanished, and I realized fully the hideousness of my predicament.

Those evil presences were many now. They sneered and grinned. And I, reaching my house in a panic of terror such as no human could feel, found the win-

dows shut—even as I had somehow known they would be.

I was powerless to get in.

What could I do? How could I enter? About the house I wandered, frantic, aimless. But no door, no window was open, and I had no power over matter. To add to my terror, I saw that my body had been found, that I was laid out, as if for burial. And I knew then that unless I entered and regained my corporeal body, I should be left forever amongst these malignant, sneering creatures pressing hard about me.

Oh, the abysmal horror of it! I was neither human nor spirit. I was a single transgressor of the laws of the universe. And unless a change came in the situation where no chance of change seemed possible, I was doomed to be utterly damned. Oh,

if only I could get back to my wonderful human body, my pulsing, kindly body through which I could feel the touch of living hands, and hear again the warm, sweet voice of the girl I loved!

Those who had refused to speak to me could have taught me how to pass through glass or wood or stone. But they were angry at my earlier refusal to heed their warning, and would not. And all I knew was how to slip back into my own form again.

**F**RANTICALLY, I beat on the closed windows of my study; for my aunt, Mrs. Holderness, was there, weeping bitterly over my body, now in its still unlidded coffin. But my beating fists made no sound; my frantic self took no shape to her flesh-clouded eyes.

Then Emily ran into the room, distracted, wild with anxiety. She darted to the coffin. She kissed the insensate body. She called and called to me in that sweet voice of hers.

Oh, how I answered her! How I prayed she might, with her spirit, feel my

anguished call. But no hope came to me from that attempt, either.

There was one dazzling moment when Emily *did* run to the window, and when I was more than half-certain that she—But she never gained the tight-shut glass. Her father was with her now. He seized her, calling to her to be sane. He thought her mad!

She struggled, she fought. Then, exhausted emotionally, she fainted, and it was over. They carried her away—my beautiful, true girl.

The haunting ghouls about me gibbered and giped at me, and I knew that they were glad, and that I was groveling on the ground in abject, pitiful fear.

I lay there on my own lawn and knew that my own dog, Rex, walked right through me. He alone seemed to know that all was not well. The hair on his back rose, and he ran howling to his kennel near the barn, while the unclean things at my shoulder chattered in vicious joy as they leaned over me.

I felt that I was slipping from one realm into another. The power to hear human sounds was less, while that to know and understand these vicious shapes was augmented.

The only light I could see emanated in a fluorescent, horrid way from the faces of the Things. How long this phase lasted I do not know. I know that the blackness was so palpable I could touch it. Then I knew nothing . . . .

**I**T was day again, but dark to me; the sun was out but I could not feel its warmth. They had taken Emily away to an insane asylum. I had gotten up. I was able to move. I was in the house now. But too late. I saw myself in my heavily-lidded coffin.

I heard Dr. Marshall telling my aunt that the reason they were going to bury me so quickly was because of my poor

Emily. And I needed only a single moment of proximity to my shell of flesh to enable me to slip into it! But the coffin lid was tight; not even that fleeting moment was vouchsafed me. My body was left shut up, to decay, while for me was to be a ceaseless haunted wandering in a mid-region of blackness, tenanted only by malignant ghouls. In that room with my dead self, I raved in awful paroxysms, in helpless supplication and anger. But to what end? Nobody knew.

The time for the funeral came. I heard them say I had been a very promising young physician. I even read my own very laudatory obituary notice.

They took my body out of the house, carried it in a hearse to the cemetery, and buried it. In spite of my frantic efforts to knock the shovels out of the hands of those who were flinging dirt down on the coffin, they buried my body.

Then the cortege left, and I sank down on my own new-made grave in a helpless torture of despair.

There was only one thing left for me to do. People at the funeral had said that Emily was at "The Pines," a sanitarium, under the care of my friend Dr. Marshall; and there, to where the buildings stood on the outskirts of the town, I determined to go. Although I felt now that Emily could never help me, I could at least go and hover close to her until such time as the gibbering of the undead, my companions, robbed me altogether of human memory.

The demons crowded thick and ever thicker about me as I struggled up from the grave. As I half crept, half swam along, they mocked me until I shrieked at them, wondering sickly if a spirit could lose its mind, too. I longed for unconsciousness as a fever-parched human longs for water; and all the time I knew that unconsciousness would never come.

Yet even this was not the greatest depth

## Just One Moment—

During the past year we have given our readers several TRUE STORIES on rare experiences in the astral body. This one is most remarkable. What do you think of it? Can you match it?

of misery which I was to plumb because of my transgression against eternal, universal law.

At the sanitarium, hovering helpless before Emily's iron-barred window, I found her under restraint, tied down, raving. For me it was the end.

"Oh, Emily—unless there is help in you, my girl—Emily—"

But what use to cry to her? Even if her senses came back to her, how could she hear my soundless, frantic call? How *could* she?

### HER STORY

"**H**ENRY is dead!" In a stunned way I, Emily Trigeau, kept saying it to myself. But it was too cruel to be true, too wrenching, too impossibly dreadful.

Oh, I had known that all those I knew and loved, especially Henry, would die. But not—surely—until they had grown old. Then I'd be old, too, and perhaps we'd all go together.

Then that day, suddenly called by his aunt to the house, I was standing beside Henry's body, a cold, dreadful thing, not Henry at all.

His aunt is a good church-woman. She put her dear arms around me and cried, between sobs, that his soul was in Heaven, where all is beautiful.

But that did me no good. What did I care about that? What right had Henry to be far, far away where things were all beautiful? I wanted him on the homey earth, able to put warm arms around me, as she was doing. Henry—

Oh, how could she talk to me of Heaven? I hated Heaven.

Then came my father, who had just heard. He took me out of Mrs. Holder-ness' arms and supported me in his. He said, almost sternly:

"Show your courage, Emily! Henry is annihilated. But for him all pain and sorrow are also annihilated. Be brave, and sane!"

My father is very intellectual, very self-controlled, very wise. But I am not intellectual, nor wise. Oh, how could my father talk to me of annihilation? What did I care about Henry's being free from pain? If only he were with me, he might have toothache and neuralgia and be cross as all creation. Oh, if Henry's voice could only be scolding me once more, as sometimes he scolded me for being slow,

and not following him in his queer scientific phrases! Why had I ever cared how much he scolded me those dear days when there was no talk of Heaven or annihilation, but just Henry, bringing me candy and reading me stuff I could not understand but loved, because his voice gave me little happy thrills!

I pushed my father and Mrs. Holder-ness aside. I sank down on a chair and sat gazing drearily at the thing which had been Henry.

After awhile they led me away. They tried to make me lie down. But I wouldn't go to bed. So we went into the library. Because upstairs the people who do such things were preparing what had been Henry for burial, and Dr. Marshall was writing a report of Henry's death, and ascribing it to unsuspected heart disease, because he smoked such a lot.

When Dr. Marshall came down to the library, he gave me a sleeping powder. I pretended I took it, and pretended to go to sleep, right there. But I was awake, and I heard Dr. Marshall saying to my father:

"Trigeau, I am going to tell you privately that it's just as well Henry Corner died. He wasn't the right man for Emily."

"Then there'll never be the right man for Emily!" I thought hotly. But Father was saying:

"Have you any reason for thinking so, Marshall?"

"Unfortunately, yes! Henry Corner's mind was always erratic—"

"Because he was agnostic! That's like you narrow-minded orthodoxies!"

"I don't mean that. He was not a true agnostic. Secretly, he was always hunting that most absurd thing, a sense-demonstration of the survival of personality after death. Under my promise of secrecy, which of course is released now, he told me the maddest tales of experiments whereby he hoped to release his spirit at will, explore the ether scientifically, and return full of information."

"**T**HEN he certainly was mad!" ejaculated my father, staring. "Who'd have thought it! Henry Corner! Why, really, I had thought him remarkably well balanced. Poor fellow!"

But Dr. Marshall's words had shocked me into a strange new feeling. Bits of what Henry had read me, told me, came rushing back, wrapped up in the queer long



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Oh, the abysmal horror of it! I was neither human nor spirit. I was  
the single transgressor of the laws of the universe

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words he'd used and which I only half understood even now. I sat up wildly, crying:

"Oh, Father, oh, Doctor, couldn't it be true? Couldn't it? Mightn't he come back?"

They jumped up and stared at me in anxious dismay. They came to me and soothed me, and they tried to smother my thoughts. But when I saw that was what they were trying to do, I slipped away from them and ran—oh, ever so fast—to where the thing they called Henry was lying.

They had put the cold thing into a coffin already. But the top was not on, and I flung myself on the casket, felt the hands, kissed the lips, called to him.

Even when I found he was not there, and Father and Dr. Marshall advanced to me to lead me away, I pushed at them.

"Look!" I cried out. "The house is all closed! Open his doors. Open his windows. How can he come in?"

There came over me a terrible feeling that Henry was outside, outside in the cold. I seemed to hear a voice. I knew it was Henry's. I shrieked at them.

"Open everything!"

"You poor, dear child," Dr. Marshall said. "Be calm! If his spirit were here closed doors and windows could not hinder it!"

"But they might!" I screamed. "If he's over there, he'd be so new to it all. He might not learn at once. The windows were open when we found him. I'll open them myself."

**B**UT before I could reach a window, father caught me sternly in his arms.

"Emily, I order you to be calm! Poor Henry is dead—dead forever. But keep your sanity. Such ideas as—"

For answer, I struggled, I fought, and then—I fainted. And when I knew anything again, I was in bed in Dr. Marshall's little private sanitarium. They didn't think I was conscious yet. I got up. I went out into the hall. I heard Dr. Marshall himself say:

"Yes, Corner's buried. I advised immediate interment on account of Emily. In such cases as hers I find that as long as the cadaver is above ground the delusion of the patient persists, and—"

"You had no right!" I screamed. "No right! He might have come back!" And I dropped into another faint, not even knowing who he'd been talking to.

**W**HEN I came to myself, sunshine was shining in my window. I sat up and—remembered. Henry was dead! I saw presently the early spring countryside beyond the bars which held me in the room; saw how the little buds outside, so like what my little hopes had been, weren't yet unfolded.

One thing seemed plain. I gained nothing by shrieking or fainting. Besides, I must have been raving. They had a "camisole" on me, a very different thing from a lace camisole. This thing was really a straight-jacket. Even to breathe was difficult. One of my first calm thoughts was the decision that I must be rid of the restraint at once.

So, when people came presently, I was very nice to them; very, what they called "rational." I said of course I knew that Henry was either gone to Heaven or annihilated. That I was going to be sensible. I said I didn't intend to grieve. And Dr. Marshall patted me. The "camisole" was taken off. Then, lying back in the pillows, I smiled gently, and told them a few more lies, and soon pretended to go to sleep. But all the time—all the time—something was outside . . .

After awhile the moon rose. The yellow sunlight was quite gone. The air was cold, the little buds seemed to quiver, the shadows in the wood made great, crooked black splashes. I know, because I was among the shadows out there, running through the misty, chilly hollows and the briery uplands, running toward the spot in the earth where they had put the cold thing they called Henry!

I had stolen a shovel from the tool house, and I was barefoot and clad only in my nightgown and a thin old coat I had found

in the wall just outside my room. But I did not know the shovel was heavy, or that I was cold. I knew it no more than I knew how I had pried open the bars at my window and gotten out while they thought I was sleeping.

The one thing I *did* know was that I had nothing to do with their talk either of annihilation or of Heaven and stiff, quiet saints whose sandals pattered along golden streets. Henry had *called me*! I had heard! That was what I knew—and must remember.

**I** WAS going to Henry! I must not think of what the others said. I must not think at all. I must just trust my belief! I must open what they had closed, and I must not be afraid.

Futile and small I was in the moonlight. I realized that. But Love went with me . . . the only friend I had.

Yes, and Love stayed with me, even when the way, which had been natural and familiar at first, presently became darker, as though shadows were crammed across it, and when my heart would have grown faint because of sinister feelings which I could not keep out of it.

It took so long, so long to get to him through stretches so cold and grim. Yet Love went with me.

Love brought me at last to the big cemetery. And crying to my heart there came to me, even as I reached the cemetery, the thin call of his voice, like the sound of a bell under water.

It was that cry alone, I think, which kept me from falling. For now that I was here, the fact that my feet were torn, and that I had suffered moments of horrible fear as I had run, was as nothing compared to the overpowering, evil hindrances which I somehow sensed I must still cope with.

The place where they had left Henry was far in toward the center of the graveyard. As I started toward it, something seemed to try to drive me back, and a crushing load seemed to be on me. By the time I reached the soft, fresh mound of earth under which I knew his body lay, the sensation I suffered of being surrounded by hostile presences was almost unendurable.

I had stopped hearing Henry's voice long ago. As at last I drove my shovel into the earth, and began to fling clods right and left, digging furiously, the final

faint silver of the moonlight faded out. I knew it wasn't really dark. Yet, for me, blackness was everywhere. Not a peaceful blackness! The darkness was peopled with shapes, with—Oh, how can I find words for such things! Shapes! I could feel them. They clutched at me!

But then when madness and unconsciousness seemed my only possible portion, my shovel struck something—something hard! The cruel, ugly coffin in which they had locked his dear face, his dear hands, the coffin I must reach, must break: *That* gave me new hope and sanity and strength.

I dug as only one could dig who warred with all the noisome legions of the Pit. I saw half the coffin. I began to unearth the whole of it, and triumph flared in me.

But I had reckoned without a full understanding of the powers of my unseen adversaries. I had not known that, as well as hampering my physical movements, they could work to dim the light of my spirit. I cannot say exactly what happened. Suddenly it seemed as though the whole of the night was filled with sneering hisses, with mocking, jibing laughter.

Doubt. . . Doubt came to me. . . The shovel slipped from my hands. . .

What would I find in the coffin? If I broke through the dreadful lid, would my dear, dear love come back into his own? Or were these things, now screaming in my ears, right? Was I only a forlorn, mad girl, desecrating a grave, breaking into the decencies of the dead, dragging to light again what light should never see? My love, my belief, were they lies? Should I go on? Or should I. . .

## NOTATION FROM THE DOCTOR

**E**XCERPT from the case of Miss Emily Trigeau, taken from the journal of Dr. Marshall:

*April 15.* The sudden, unexpected death of Henry Corner has cast a gloom over my whole day.

Regrettable as were his drifts toward impossible speculations on futurity, he was, nevertheless, a brilliant pathologist, experimentalist, and my friend.

His death was a shocking surprise to all of us. I pray God it may not prove too much for the nerves of high-strung, sensitive Emily Trigeau, his fiancée.

*April 16.* Emily has gone to pieces over Corner's death. She is quite unbalanced mentally. For her sake I had Cor-

ner's burial hastened. He was interred this afternoon.

Her case, on a snap diagnosis, is an acute, maniac attack, with a favorable prognosis. She is in my sanitarium now, and I am using opiates, cold packs, and some forms of restraint.

*April 17.* Emily Trigeau, in spite of cold packs, soporifics and so forth, remained in a state of acute delirium, and was very noisy. In fact, the poor child had to be continually restrained. We used a camisole.

At five, however, or possibly a little after, in the evening, she ceased shouting and became calm and quiet. When I visited her, at fifteen minutes past seven, she spoke to me rationally, and asked to have restraint removed.

This I had done. Her pupils were slightly enlarged, and her color was pale. Pulse and respiration regular. Her recovery seemed complete. She smiled pathetically over her delusion that Corner's spirit might yet return to his body, and showed perfect rationality.

I sat with her until nearly eight, as I am very fond of her. Then she declared herself sleepy, and went off like a tired child into what seemed a natural, beneficial slumber.

It was merely a ruse—that slumber. But she deceived me, and later, her nurse. I was so convinced that the slumber was real that I had no hesitation in leaving her; and the nurse, too, presently left the bedside to find a moment's relaxation in the corridor. It was when the woman returned to the bedside that she discovered we had been taken in, and that Emily was gone.

**E**MILY, being evidently fearful of the nurse in the corridor, had escaped through her barred window. Astounding! The bars were strong and heavy, yet they were pulled and twisted apart enough to allow the squeezing through of a human body. Even yet I cannot understand how that fragile girl could have developed such superhuman power.

Footprints—Emily's—were visible in the

soft ground outside the window and pretty prints they were, God bless her soul! But my relief at finding them was immediately clouded by the discovery that she had left barefoot, and with no other clothes than a long, thin coat which was found missing.

The night was raw and chill. Among my other fears for her, I thought it very likely she might get up a pneumonia, which in her debilitated condition, would in all likelihood prove fatal.

**I** KNEW that search must be begun instantly, and I turned out my whole staff. But results were only negative until about eleven, when I happened to think of the cemetery, and of some of Emily's earlier ravings in which she had uttered much about graveyards and burying.

As soon as that idea came, I went to my roadster, and taking only Miss Glynn, my head nurse, with me, I set out by the shortest route to Greencrest cemetery.

The journey through the winding roads which led finally to Corner's grave was an anxious one; for I feared, each moment, to find Emily collapsed on the way before us.

When we rounded one turn, and I stared sharply ahead, I nearly wrecked my car. For the earth had been dug out of a grave, the coffin wrenched and broken open, and hauled half from the ground. On a nearby mound sat two figures which sent my senses reeling, so that I barely stopped the car before—

*Emily Trigeau and Henry Corner!* Corner! And I had tested him for death! I had hurried his premature burial!

The man's hair was snow white. But he was alive, rational; and in his arms lay Emily Trigeau. On her shining face he was raining passionate kisses, in a wild abandonment of joy which superbly ignored the two of us who sat before them, gasping and unnerved.

*April 23.* All this occurred a week ago. Yet I am still shaking, still unnerved, to think what would have been if Emily had not answered, in the desperate courage of love, the call she believed she heard.



*The bars were strong and heavy, yet they were pulled and twisted apart . . . .*

"Get back to hell  
where you belong!"  
screamed Selah. "I  
don't know where  
Caleb Proctor is"



# THE

*As told to*  
**HAROLD S. CORBIN**

*By*  
**WALTER G. PROCTOR**

**O**LD Selah Clark plainly was afraid. Gazing off across a field of clover that I never shall forget, he sat on the porch of his ancient farmhouse and his voice became a whine.

"The wine is gone," he said. "The bottle we sealed twenty-five years ago to-night has disappeared. That isn't right. Your uncle knew where it was. But he's dead. The wine is gone."

It was about my great-uncle, Caleb Proctor—my late grandfather's older brother—that I had come to ask this man. To my brother and me Uncle Caleb was very much of a tradition. We knew, of course, that he

lived a recluse on his farm in northern Connecticut and vaguely that he possessed a moderate fortune. But that was about all we knew.

When we received word of his sudden and mysterious death it gave us a jolt. Frank and I were his sole heirs. The money would come in handy to us, for Frank



# TWELFTH MAN

*"It is a law of God and man that he who kills must be killed. . . . Where is Caleb Proctor?"*

*Bent on retribution, the eleven wraiths of the men he survived attended Selah Clark's fantastic banquet on their anniversary night*

had tried to negotiate a curve in an automobile road with disastrous results, and I—well, I wanted to be married.

Then as things happen, there came a hitch in the proceedings. The trust company that managed my uncle's affairs wanted proof of the old man's death. The body never had been found. Before they

would turn over a penny to us they demanded absolute proof that he was dead. Moreover, they were obdurate.

And that was our predicament. A fortune almost in our hands when we needed it most, and yet withheld. Since Frank lay swathed in bandages on a hospital bed, it remained for me to see what I could do

to solve the mystery of our Uncle Caleb.

So up to Libertyville I went—a little farming community seven miles from the railroad, and shortly I found old Selah Clark who had the next farm to Uncle Caleb's and who, I was informed, could tell me all I wanted to know. Before I had finished with that hateful old man I wished he was in Hades—where, I have no doubt, he probably went.

**S**ELAH was a tall, gaunt, gray-bearded old fellow who seemed to be eternally laughing at me. Behind those rheumy blue eyes through which he studied me, as he sat on his porch, there lurked derision—jeering laughter that angered me from the start. Despite his toil-hardened hands, his faded ancient suit and his battered old felt hat, he spoke in a cultured voice that amazed me. In fact, all the while I talked with him I felt there was something

Happening to glance through the farmhouse door behind him, I saw something that jerked me to attention. It seemed so incongruous to see a dress suit hanging there, carefully pressed and in fairly recent mode. What, I asked myself, could this creaking old fossil want with a dress suit in a farming region of this kind? I showed my surprise for Selah Clark laughed aloud.

"Why, this is amazing, eh?" he said in a bantering tone, as if reading my thoughts. "A dinner suit, to be sure! Now why should a swallow-tail, grosgrain vest, ribbon-striped trousers be hanging in this old codger's kitchen here amid these surroundings?" He waved a hand casually at the meadows and woods over which the autumn sunshine flowed. "Absurd, contradictory, discordant. Positively indecent, some of our neighbors might say."

I flushed in embarrassment. It stung me that he had read my mind so completely.

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**Again he snuffed out a candle. I watched him breathlessly. There was something so final about his action that I had the uncanny feeling that each candle was a part of his own life.**

---

strange about him that I could not analyze.

"So you want to know about Caleb, do you?" he mused, gazing at me speculatively.

"Where he went," I said. "How he died."

I thought his eyes changed a trifle when I said "died." But his face behind that gray beard might have been a mask.

"How he—died, eh? Well, no one knows exactly. He lived alone. Presumably, he died in the swamp. Footprints led to it. Only they were indistinct. It rained the night he disappeared. Folks believe he went there to fix a fence, or to look for one of his cows. In the darkness he fell in and sank beyond help. The swamp is said to be bottomless."

"Anybody search the swamp at all?" I asked.

"Oh, we prodded here and there with poles. It's a dangerous place. You might go down and try it yourself. But don't go too near or you'll fall in like Caleb did. That would be terrible, wouldn't it?"

Jeering laughter, cloaked under assumed helpfulness, I loathed this old man. His sneering smile, his patronizing manner irritated me.

"Oh, well," he shrugged, patronizing again, "suppose I tell you. You might be interested, since it has somewhat to do with your uncle. Come up here, young man, and listen to a story of ghosts—of spirits who have passed beyond. Come up and sit down."

He shoved forward a chair.

"You've heard of these 'last man' organizations," he began. "They date from the seventeenth century when twelve gentlemen who had been accustomed to gather at a boat club at Henley-on-the-Thames in England agreed to meet and dine once a year at the boat house until the surviving man of the twelve had dined alone.

**T**HIS plan was fully carried out and, at the end you remember—or do you?—the matter had become of such public interest that it bore fruit in the form of a play entitled 'Geoffrey Dale, or the Last Man.'"

"You belong to such an organization?" I asked.

"We all did—lawyers and doctors and other professionals hereabouts. Your uncle Caleb did. For twenty-five years we met



annually on the eighteenth of October to have our banquet and to drink a toast to the departed members. For want of a better place, we met in the upper story of the exhibition hall at the fair grounds here. A caterer from Hartford served us.

"Three members have died during the year," he went on. "At our last banquet only four remained out of the twelve. Your uncle Caleb, the fourth youngest member, offered the toast. He little knew he drank it to himself."

HE chuckled nastily. I gasped. There was something so sinisterly naive about this old man that it made me shudder. I wondered if all oldsters talked that way when age and death dogged their footsteps.

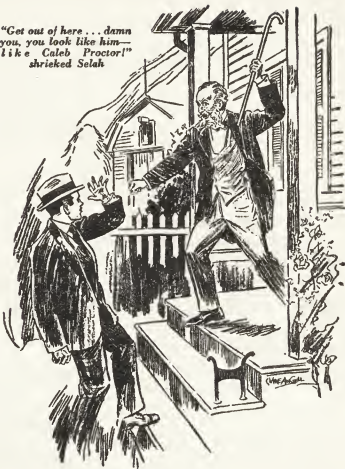
"It was a strange scene to watch our brotherhood sit down to its solemn banquet," he said, as if enjoying my discomfiture. "Rites which followed none save a member might look upon. Eight vacant places last year. But each was set as if the departed were present. And alongside these dishes laid out for the dead, tall candles stood, burning in memory of those who would gather with the brotherhood no more on earth."

"At ten o'clock, in accordance with the annual custom, all the lights were extinguished save only the eight candles. As the secretary—your uncle—called the roll of the dead, those candles were snuffed out one by one. A short period of silent prayer followed in the darkness."

"Good Lord!" I exclaimed. "Then what?"

"Then we went away. Three of the four that attended that last banquet have died. Your uncle Caleb was the last of the three. To-night I dine alone. I am the last of twelve. To me reverts all the property of the club." His eyes seemed to light an instant. Then they clouded. "But the

*"Get out of here... damn you, you look like him—like Caleb Proctor!"*  
shrieked Selah



wine which we sealed twenty-five years ago and which should be opened by me to-night, is gone. I don't like that. I don't know where the bottle is. Your uncle knew. He was the secretary. But he's dead. I ought to open that wine. It isn't right that I shouldn't have that wine."

His attitude was queerly changed now. He sat brooding, staring off toward that clover field that still remains in my memory. The laughter was gone from his eyes.

"SO you're going to dine alone to-night,"

I mused, studying him. "Surely it will be an awesome spectacle—you at the head of the table, eleven vacant places, eleven candles burning to be extinguished by you in memory of those who are dead. It's too suggestive. I don't envy you your position."

He shot me a swift glance. No longer was there jeering laughter in his eyes. My words somehow had brought sudden fear. The old man had turned craven. His hands

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## Why does the grass grow so green at the corner of the fence in the east pasture? Why do the clover blossoms there drip red?

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trembled. His eyes were wide and his breath gasping. Suddenly he sprang to his feet.

"Get out of here!" he shrieked. "Damn you, you look like him—like Caleb Proctor. Get out of here—or I—I'll—"

With maniacal rage he started toward me, shrieking, brandishing his cane, advancing to strike me. I retreated as he came, backing down the porch steps, amazed, stupefied, watching him as he snarled in fear and rage, striking at me, his eyes gleaming wildly.

**T**O say that I was thunderstruck at this sudden demonstration is putting it mildly. What was the matter with him? What had I done to offend him so quickly? I could not make it out, unless I had dwelt too dramatically on the scene of that lonely dinner. But it seemed to me there was something else. His rage at me was born of fear within himself. And somehow, I felt he could tell me much more about my uncle's fate than the meager information he had given.

I left him fuming on the porch and set about finding a place in the village for the night. Inquiry at a garage brought me eventually to Mrs. Woodbury's on the Libertyville turnpike.

Mrs. Woodbury proved a motherly, buxom woman of middle age. She led me to a room—a queer, old-fashioned one with a huge four-poster bed, braided rugs on the floor, and a commode with a pitcher and bowl on it. The window overlooked an old-fashioned garden seared by a recent frost. But what arrested my attention was a group of buildings that could be seen not far away.

"What is that place over there?" I asked. "Libertyville fair grounds," she answered.

Immediately I was interested. So that was where old Selah was to have his lonely dinner! I stared out the window.

"Upstairs in the exhibition hall is a general meeting place in our community," Mrs. Woodbury volunteered. "The Masons meet there, and so do the Odd Fellows. But there's a queer enough affair going on there to-night."

"Selah Clark's banquet?" I returned, striving to be casual.

"Oh, you know about it?"

"I've just been talking with Selah himself. I'm Caleb Proctor's grand-nephew. I came up here to learn what I could about his death."

The woman pursed her lips. Her eyes widened.

"Well, I guess you'll find out enough," she asserted.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

She studied me doubtfully. Then she shrugged.

"Caleb Proctor was a good man. Everybody liked him. Shrewd but honest. Selah Clark's different. I could tell you many stories about poor widow women whose affairs he's handled. He's a hateful old man. Sometimes I wonder if God—"

"What?" I asked as she stopped. "He and my uncle were good friends, weren't they?"

"They used to be partners—until—"

"Partners!" I said. "I didn't know that."

"Yes. Partners in a law business. Until they got to going around with the same girl. Caleb won her. Selah never forgave him for that. They broke up the partnership."

"That's interesting," I said. "That must have been my great-aunt Betsy."

"It was." She nodded. "I can just remember her. She died when I was ten."

"Uncle Caleb never married again," I said.

**N**O. And Selah Clark never married at all. After the partnership broke they always were rivals. Always took opposite sides on law cases. Everybody was surprised when they took up farms side by side here twenty years ago. People began to think they'd patched up their differences."

"But they hadn't?"

"They used to visit each other occasionally," she said thoughtfully. "But I—I oughtn't to be telling you this. It's just gossip."

"But I'm interested. It may help me."

"Well," she said, "there's been a lot of speculation as to what became of your uncle's money."

"Money?" I queried. "I thought the trust company had it."

"Um-m-m-m. Maybe most of it. But he was supposed to have considerable cash right with him on the farm. You see, just a few weeks ago he wanted to buy that neighboring farm over which a brook runs. And so did Selah. The idea was that if Selah got it he'd squeeze the young sawmill owner who had a power-right down below. There's a way of turning the stream. And if you uncle got it, Selah'd lose his chance to make some more money. The hired man heard them quarreling over it."

"What hired man?"

"Well, he was working in the woods over beyond the clover field. He heard them wrangling. It wasn't long after that that your uncle disappeared."

I studied the woman. Her lips were set tightly, her eyes bright.

"Did Selah need this money?" I asked.

"Land sakes, no! That's the kind of tight-fisted, grasping old money-grabber Selah is. He lives for money. He's mean and crafty. Ever since he lost your Aunt Betsy he had no other interest in life but to hoard money. He's a good sight richer than your uncle ever was, and land knows your uncle was supposed to have had plenty."

"It's evident," I said, "you have your suspicions. Did you ever talk with anybody—the district attorney, for instance?"

"Yes, I did," she said at last. "I told the state's attorney over at Highstone, but he only laughed at me. He said the evidence was plain enough that Caleb fell in the swamp."

"Yes?" I echoed significantly.

"But land sakes!" she exclaimed. "I never thought I'd get to be the village gossip. I better be going. I've got work to do."

And despite my pleadings she would not return.

For a time I sat there in thought. It could be true, what Mrs. Woodbury thought. I could picture the hate that might creep into

old Selah's soul, first because of the love affair for which he never had forgiven my uncle, and then because he was about to be thwarted in the purchase of the farm. Long years of hatred flaming up at last. Rankling in the bosom of a greedy old man such as Mrs. Woodbury described Selah Clark to be. Finding satisfaction in a horrible deed. Selah might have murdered my uncle and have skillfully concealed the crime. How was one to know? How could I find out if it were true?

Mrs. Woodbury called me to supper, though she would say little during the meal. Afterward, in need of air and exercise, and feeling that a walk would do me good, I set out across the fields toward the fair grounds hall. Arriving there, I climbed the stairs, passed through an anteroom and

into a great bare barn-like hall where an elderly man with all the atmosphere of a headwaiter was at work setting a long table with silver and dishes and white linen.



THERE were twelve places. At eleven of them stood candles. Several vacuum containers stood about on the floor and I knew that the viands for that eerie banquet were soon to be set out. Starting conversation with the saturnine individual there was not difficult.

"Fifth year I've set these places," he remarked. "We've orders for only one dinner to-night. Believe me, when I've served the one guest I won't wait to take the dishes away. Me for Highstone to-night. I'll come back in the morning. The ceremony afterwards is damnable. I didn't sleep for weeks."

"Oh, then you saw it?" I suggested.

He eyed me uncertainly. Then he nodded.

"It was all new to me then. There's a false attic over this room, with a peephole in it—a small shutter meant for ventilation. I climbed up there. Believe me, I'll not do it to-night."

He paused from finishing the arrangement of the table lights that he had wired from the wall.

"There ought to be a bottle of champagne to open to-night. But I hear it's been lost,

Old man Clark is greatly upset about it. It seems to matter a lot, but I guess that's only an old man's whim."

He suddenly became silent, as if he thought he had said too much, and it was then, for no reason at all, that I was seized with a desire to view that banquet just as he had done—to crawl up into that false attic by way of the ladder in the anteroom, find that ventilating shutter and see what would take place.

**T**HE more I thought about it, the more it appealed to me. I found myself suddenly drawn to it as though some force outside myself worked on me. At first I argued with myself that it would be unsportsmanlike to spy on the old man. But it was as if some spell had settled on me that I could not resist. The feeling grew stronger and stronger that I must see the weird banquet. It was as if some voice outside myself commanded me.

Hardly before I realized what I did, I was scaling that ladder, watching to see that the waiter did not observe me, creeping along in the darkness of the narrow space above as noiselessly as possible toward a point where stabs of light showed from below. I wormed my way forward. At last I could look down below. I found I was at one side of the hall where the gambrel roof sloped downward and that by peeping through the shutters of the ventilator I had a clear view of the banquet table a dozen feet below.

The waiter put in his final touches unaware of my presence above him. Then hardly had I made myself as comfortable as possible in the cramped quarters before the door opened and old Selah Clark appeared.

He presented a far different aspect in the swallow-tail than he had in the faded and patched suit of the day. He might have been, despite his remarkable age, an elderly gentleman of means about to enter his library, for he wore the evening clothes familiarly and well. He glanced once over the table and its setting and then advanced leisurely to his place at the head, while the waiter stood deferentially by.

The waiter began serving at once. I, from my peephole scarcely twenty feet away, observed that the food was of excellent quality and well served. Strangely, I fancied others beside Selah were eating, too! But Selah Clark ate little. He seemed to be in an extremely nervous state, fur-

tive and high strung. At last, as if he could endure it no longer, he signaled to the waiter to go. And Selah Clark was left alone.

I wondered what he would do. For a time he sat there, his head sunk low on his chest, evidently thinking. Studying him in the glow of the table lamps, Selah Clark's face appeared in shadows that did nothing to soften its hard outlines, and I saw the greed and churlishness that had made up his life. But there was something else. He was deathly afraid. Above the pinching parsimoniousness of his nature I saw that fear had seized him, that he looked about him jerkily, raising his eyes to stare into the shadows, listening to each creak of the wooden building as it gave to the night wind outside.

Thus he sat for a time, alone, turning his head at intervals, twitching agitatedly, staring about him. At last he seemed to come to a decision. Hoisting himself stiffly out of his chair, he went to the lamps and began to extinguish them one by one. But when he came to the last he hesitated, loath to be alone in the candle-light, staring about him as if he expected some one. He put one hand to the last lamp. He drew it back. There would be too many shadows there—shadows that danced and crept forward menacingly.

Suddenly, he straightened. Once more he gazed about him as if he had heard some one. I wondered if I had made some unconscious move that might have betrayed me. But I found I could not move! I felt my legs and arms had become numb. But they were not so in the usual sense. A strange force pervaded that whole room and extended to me up there in the attic, a strange force of recurrent waves that held me tighter and tighter as in a nightmare web.

**I**T was that force, I think, that inexplicable, intangible spell, that came sweeping over the place that Selah Clark felt. He put out a trembling hand, not to extinguish the last light but to turn on another. His arm seemed to be jerked back and before my gaze the last one snapped out.

He had not done that. But it was out, leaving the old man standing there in the dancing candle-light—the light of eleven tapers set at the places for the dead.

Now he appeared to grip himself for the task at hand. It seemed to take all

his strength. Steadying himself by the table, he mumbled a name I could not hear. He reached over and snuffed out a candle. He straightened, moved on. Again he mumbled. Again he snuffed a candle. I watched him breathlessly. There was something so final, so conclusive, about his action. I had the uncanny feeling each candle was a part of his own life.

So he moved until only three candles remained—those set for the ones who had died in the last year. Now he hesitated.

A moment he stood there, motionless. Then one hand went to his throat and a sudden screech of terror came from his lips. His eyes stared into the darkness across where I could not see. Slowly he began to back away, retreating from some fearsome thing there, gripping the chairs along the table for support. Back, back, he cringed until he fell with a thud into his own chair at the head of that awful banquet table.

Still he stared, his eyes popping. The part of his face not hidden by the beard was deathly white, his nostrils blue. His hands like bird's claws now, were outspread on the white linen before him. He leaned forward, staring, his fingers crushing the linen.

The candles flickered. I saw their three flames bent in one direction as if a breeze blew across them.

And suddenly, as old man Clark sat there gripped in terror, vague forms stole out of the shadows—silent, intangible forms, wraiths, a company of them, old men, eight of them coming out of the shadows and taking their places at the table. They all were dressed in dinner clothes. They all were gray-haired. Some wore beards and some were smoothly shaved or else had facial decorations of another day and generation. Two or three might have been sixty-five. Their clothes were of the oldest styles. Others were seventy, with clothes of slightly later mode.

The eight took places. The three chairs where the three candles still burned remained vacant.

Again I heard sounds of feasting!

Now came a voice. It was a voice that had no body or tone, but was borne in on the mind as an image is registered silently on a photographic plate. I understood every word. But I did not hear any voice. My brain alone caught the meaning.

"How goes the hour?" asked the voice.

"It is ten o'clock," answered another voice.

THEY were seated now. The places except for three, were filled. Selah Clark sat there terror-stricken. The others were nonchalant in their attitudes.

"Ten o'clock." I saw now that the voice came from the large, dignified man at the opposite end of the table from Clark. "Let us remember our departed brothers. Let us drink to their memory."

Wine glasses that had been standing at each plate were reached for, held aloft. Suddenly I saw that each held an amber liquid, sparkling, scintillating, in the candlelight. None had poured the draught. But there it was in each glass, golden amber, sparkling.

The company arose. Chairs were pushed back. The glasses held aloft.

"Call the roll."

Solemnly another voice responded.

"Dr. George Anson Goodhue."

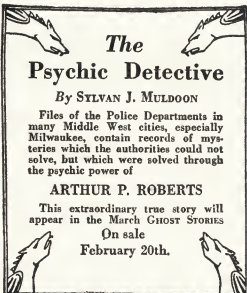
Out of the shadows a new wraith advanced—an elderly person I had not seen before—to stand quietly behind one of the chairs where a candle burned.

A fitful breath of air from somewhere extinguished the candle as he took his place. I shuddered.

"Waldo Simpson Fisher."

A second wraith came quietly out of the shadow,

"Caleb Manfred Proctor."



**The**  
**Psychic Detective**

By **SYLVAN J. MULDOON**

Files of the Police Departments in many Middle West cities, especially Milwaukee, contain records of mysteries which the authorities could not solve, but which were solved through the psychic power of

**ARTHUR P. ROBERTS**

This extraordinary true story will appear in the **MARCH GHOST STORIES**

On sale  
**February 20th.**

The strange company waited. It seemed to me I could see a vague form back there in the shadows, but it did not advance like the others.

Again that voice—"Cabel Manfred Proctor!"

There was no response. But old Selah Clark was half out of his chair, breathing through bared teeth, his trembling hands clinging to the table for support, his terror-filled eyes seeming to start from their sockets.

A rasping sound came from his throat. He tried to speak but the strange person at the head of the table raised a hand, silencing him.

"Selah Clark," came the voice, like recurrent waves of thought, "where is your compatriot, Caleb Proctor? You must answer that."

Now Selah seemed to regain possession of himself. His horrible face set in a ghastly sneer. He tried to stand erect.

"How do I know?" he jeered. "Am I Caleb Proctor's keeper? Is not Caleb Proctor able to take care of himself?"

"SELAH CLARK," came the voice again, and this time there was untold vehemence in it, "in mortal form we ever were honorable men. None ever stooped to a foul or dishonorable act. Each of us deemed honor a prize to be sought. But a foul thing has come into our company. Murder has been done. It is a law of God and man that he who kills must be killed. The integrity of our company cannot be besmirched. Where is Caleb Proctor?"

The vehemence of the voice seemed to break in on Clark's consciousness. It overwhelmed him so that he suddenly screamed in a horrible way.

"Damn you! *Damn you all!* Get back to hell where you belong—all of you. I don't know where Caleb Proctor is."

The tenseness of that awful company seemed to relax, as if each had come to a decision at Selah's words. Selah stood there at his place, stooping, cringing, his gaze darting from one to another. But then, I saw, had turned toward the man at the far end of the table. And once more came that voice.

"Why does the grass grow so green at the corner of the fence in the east pasture, Selah Clark? Why do the clover blossoms there drip red? Answer me. Where is Caleb Proctor?"

"Damn you!" screamed Selah. "Go

back to hell—all of you! Leave me alone!"

The strange voice came inexorably.

"Open the wine!"

Suddenly, I saw that in the center of the table, scintillating like the liquid in the glasses, glowing with a wierd light that took no atom from the single candle-flame on the table but was all its own, stood a bottle of champagne. I had not seen where it came from. No one that I saw had put it there. But there it stood—golden amber, radiating fire of itself like a devil's brew—or an angel's.

One of the wraiths reached for it, picked it up. He passed from his chair to the side of Selah Clark who had sunk back into his seat as if he had collapsed. The bottle was extended to him. Falteringly, mechanically, he took it, his breath whistling through his teeth.

"You are the last of twelve, Selah Clark," came the eerie voice from the head of the table. "Here is the wine that was secreted. You must open it. Come, drink to your friends. Open it!"

The single candle flickered, guttered, seemed about to go out. I could not see well what happened then. I only could hear Selah Clark's stentorious breathing, every breath as though his heart would burst with terrible fear.

Then I knew that driven by that same stupendous force that held me, he was opening the bottle. I heard the pop of the cork, the hiss of the liquid. An instant I heard it hiss. Then suddenly there was the crashing of glass. And suddenly a flame, swift, radiant, like fire from heaven, leaped from that liquid, for one terrible instant throwing that room into high relief so that the forms of the wraiths there were lost completely in its brightness. I saw old Selah Clark sitting alone there at the table, the broken bottle clutched in his hands, a look of surprise and horror and ultimate despair in his face as he stared at his right arm held so that I could not see. And then as if I had been hit a blow on the head, complete blackness filled the place and I seemed to be falling down infinite space beyond all hope of return.

**Y**ET I remember vaguely creeping from that attic, tearing my coat on a nail, scrambling down in terror, running across fields in the starlight and getting to my room.

The next really conscious thought I had



was late the next morning when Mrs. Woodbury knocked at my door and at my bidding opened it.

"My stars, what a late sleeper!" she exclaimed. "There's news this morning that I thought you'd like to hear—why, how in the world did you tear your coat and get it so dusty? I'll take it right down and mend it—"

"What is the news?" I demanded.

"Well—Selah Clark is dead."

"Dead?" I echoed inanely.

"Yes. The strangest thing! That hateful old man had his ridiculous banquet over at the exhibition hall last night. All alone. He evidently tried to open a bottle

of champagne and it broke and cut the artery in his right wrist. The caterer found him there this morning, dead in his chair. He had bled to death."

Later that day, when we investigated, the state's attorney from Highstone and I found the body of my uncle buried in the fence corner of Selah Clark's east pasture. Beside it was a rifle, easily identified by the neighbors as belonging to Selah, from which had come the bullet that penetrated my uncle's skull and killed him.

Later also, fifteen one-thousand-dollar bills, still in my uncle's wallet, were discovered in Selah Clark's desk in the bedroom of his farmhouse.

## WHAT THEY SAY—

*"Serial stories are frequently better than short stories, but the waiting is so long. . . . Let us have ONE serial an issue. Let us have more stories of horror, of supernatural nights and wraiths who are of the conventional haunted house variety. . . . I do like the blood-curdling kind who inspire terror."*—B. C. Black.

\* \* \* \*

*"GHOST STORIES is my favorite magazine and I never miss an issue of it if I can help it, but I think it could be improved by adding a department which tells how to hypnotize or how to experiment with various occult subjects. Of course, if these articles were in story form they would be even more interesting."*—Mrs. Nell Wollenhaupt.

\* \* \* \*

*"This letter is from one who has read fiction for forty-five years. I am now sixty years of age. Though I have read fiction much, I have read history more, geography as much, and biography to a degree . . . GHOST STORIES is in a class alone, and, occupying the realms of fictional endeavor, it intrudes its norm into the vaster fields of the Unknown and the Unknowable as no other literary effort may or can. . . . As for improving the magazine, it is not necessary to improve it."*—Charles E. Rupe.

\* \* \* \*

*"Your monthly reprint of a celebrity's favorite ghost story is a good idea, as it is a commitment by such leading lights that even they, too, are interested in this type of literature, bearing with it to a degree a certain percentage of intellectual approval of occult things . . . Cagliostro's 'Spirit Tales' seem to be too important scientifically to be shoved so far back. Perhaps with 'Spirit Tales' to open and 'The Meeting Place' to close each issue, these two outstanding features would be like sturdy sentinels for the fictional fillers."*—William O. Iserloh.

## WHAT DO YOU SAY?

"On your guard!" cried the dervish. "They come!"



Because he loved  
Onaida beyond all else,  
John Vestall defied  
the icy breath of  
the Sarsar,  
Wind of Death

## Where None

"DO YOU believe in the *Djinn* then?" said John Vestall slowly. There was a challenge in his tone, and also a curious hesitation, as if he himself was of two minds on the subject.

Sheik Zeyd of the Beni Waṣṣar bent his hawk's eyes downward and began to trace meaningless arabesques in the sand with his ivory camel-stick. His Arabic was

Terror flashed through John Vestall's mind as the demonic blade fell like a thunderbolt



By  
ARTHUR T. JOLLIFFE

## Could Live

flavored with a slight English accent.

"I do, *saidi*," he said, "and then again I do not. My Oxford education is, I suppose, the reason why, unlike Furtak here, I cannot believe in the creatures of our old mythology—actual malevolent beings such as the *afrits* and *ghuls* who are said to take any shape at will and work evil on men. But . . ."

"There is always a 'but,' O Sheik," said

Furtak. His face was gaunt, intent, brooding; the light of the little camel-dung fire stole beneath his heavy brows and glittered in his strange eyes.

Zeyd took no notice of the interruption. "But," he went on evenly, "I am a Bedouin still, despite what Oxford did to me. Say that the *Djinn* represent the forces of evil, say that they symbolize those impulses which make a man curse Allah or betray the salt of his friend, and I will tell you that I believe in them."

"Now by God!" said Furtak. His cigarette glowed brightly—strong evidence of his emotion. "It were better, *saidi*, that you had never been taught in the schools of the foreigners. The desert alone has been my teacher, and I am wiser than either of you. Allah is God, and Muhammad is His prophet—" Then, as the two other men bowed their heads in acknowledgment—"also there are angels, as the Koran says. Since this is so, there is likewise *Shaitan*, and the *Djinn* who are his ministers. Will you never believe an old man? Why, if you are so incredulous, do you then follow me to Djinnestan?"

"PEACE!" exclaimed Vestall sharply.

"We have had enough of these disputes. Have I not said I believe you? There is my dream . . . Mecca lies two hundred miles behind us; before us is still the desert—and God knows what! If you speak truth, four more camps will bring us to the proof of whether dreams and *Djinn* are delusions or not."

Furtak subsided, grumbling. Zeyd continued his idle tracing in the sand. A camel groaned nearby; the night wind came slipping across the dunes, fanning the dying fire into an opaline glow. And John Vestall went outside the tent to walk alone under the stars.

Yes, there was his dream. John Vestall knew that there were men who scoffed at dreams. As he had scoffed in a time when he knew less than he did now, when he had made one of Yale's pseudo-intelligentzia—clean, intolerant, cynical young men who took Nietzsche to their hearts and were impatient of religions and tradition. But since then he had learned much, and his head had bowed before the shrines of many mysteries.

His memories came flowing as smoothly as the sands under his feet. Voodoo worship in Haitian jungles, with himself standing awed as the *lois* descended from their shadowy spheres and took ecstatic possession of the Legba dancers; tinkle of sistrums in immemorial rites of Isis among the soaring columns of a hidden temple near Baalbek; black magic with the *dug-pas* of Tibet; strange devotions to Malik Taos with the Yezidee devil-worshippers; hours spent among the simple monks of Mount Athos; wild bacchanals on Olym-

pus where the great Bacchus was still adored with the thyrsus and the ivy; Druidical chants rising on dark midnight amidst the weird monoliths of Stonehenge. Scenes such as these had become part of the warp and woof of his life's tapestry. He had sought them, he had trodden the jungles, the deserts, the icy mountain passes, in search of—what? The fulfillment of a dream. But what if that dream proved only an idle vision?

If so, then all things were dreams. The silent desert, the murmuring wind, the spangled sky with the great Star of the Prophet glittering in the zenith—all were dreams and he himself a shadowy phantom.

He closed his eyes and gave himself up to contemplation. As always, she came to him, came to him as she had first done in his dingy London lodgings.

He thought of that time. He remembered vividly every incident of that momentous night. Major McNeill of the Scottish Fusiliers had been there; Bracken, the journalist; the Rath

girls. There had been talk, not the kind that stimulates the imagination—theaters, the war, the tariff—oh, a dozen inconsequen-

tial things. And after his visitors had gone he had read a dozen pages of Paine's "Age of Reason"—surely not the kind of book to induce mystical visions.

Then to bed; sleep; the awakening—if it could be so called. The room brighter than noon-day, but with none of its familiar furnishings visible. Instead, a vision of a cave, a huge domed hall aisled by ponderous pillars, and in that cave an altar, and on that altar a woman. And the woman! Surely not of this age, with her long black hair sweeping back from her ivory forehead, her delicately aquiline features, her tiny feet and hands with their gilded nails, the loveliness of her body glimpsed through shimmering folds of gauzy fabric.

ONLY a glimpse of all this, but in that glimpse John Vestall had lost his heart, and next day his feet had set him on that ten-year-old quest which had led him around the weary old world and back again. It drew him now to the wild interior of Arabia, the dusty trail, the pitiless sun, the nightly desert sky, lonely with stars.



Well . . . she had never left him; the vision had not faded. Never again had he seen that great cave-like place which had been revealed to him in his first dreaming. But always there was her face—it swam before him now in the darkness, ethereal, lovely, startlingly real. He watched the curve of those half-smiling lips, the mystery of the closed, painted eyelids.

Why did they not open? They never did. But John Vestall believed that some day her eyes would look upon him, and he knew that he would find them brighter than the desert stars.

He opened his eyes but the vision still persisted. The face receded swiftly, it blurred, its features became confused, but still he saw it, a beckoning taper lighting his way eastward. And as it disappeared, either in the black distance or in the dim recesses of his own brain, John Vestall knew with a solemn joy that he was nearing the end of his quest.

He turned on the high dune and faced the camp, saw the tiny watch-fire shining like a ruddy beacon.

"*Kismet!*" he whispered reverently.

No longer might he doubt that his Fates were at last leading him aright. He thought of Zeyd and the strange Furtak and laughed as he thought of the difference between men's souls. There was Zeyd, Arab, Bedouin, educated, polished like a hard jewel, whose contact with Western ways had stripped him of his inherited beliefs and left him adrift on a sea of blind science. Vestall suspected that the Sheik even entertained secret doubts of Muhammad and the Koran; no doubt he was contemptuous of Vestall's wild quest in his own heart. But the Bedouin had followed his friend.

VESTALL remembered that day, years ago, when he had saved Zeyd from the flashing scimitar of the Roualla while on *ghrazzu*—the camel-raid, thought of the blood-brotherhood they had afterward sworn. It had seemed like a passage from the Book of Ruth . . . "Whither thou goest I will go . . ." Zeyd with his skepticism! John Vestall laughed again, thinking of the incredulity of his British friends had they been told he was more superstitious than a "bloody Arab."

But Furtak! Ah, there was mystery for you! How, among all the pilgrims who swarmed about the Kaaba in Mecca,

had the little, wizened dervish singled him out? Vestall had thought his disguise impenetrable; had not Zeyd assured him that he looked more like a Bedouin than Zeyd himself? But Furtak had sidled up to Vestall in the press and had said, "O *Feringhi!*" and after that there was nothing left to do but follow him. The man had looked at Vestall over the table in the little cafe, and his black eyes had twinkled.

"You seek Onaida, *saidi?*" he had said.

Onaida . . . so that was her name!

And then the weird tale that the dervish had unfolded!

ONAIIDA . . . daughter of Baaltis, Queen of Sheba . . . who had worshiped strange gods . . . whom Suleiman had cursed because of her sorceries . . . had placed her under the power of the *Djinn* whose master he was by virtue of the Forbidden Name of Allah and his Great Seal . . . she who had lain now in Djinnestan—abode of the demons—for three thousand years, waiting a deliverer . . . Vestall, who had loved her in that forgotten life . . . whom even now she was calling to her.

"Ask me not how I know, *saidi,*" the dervish had said. "Perhaps the stars told me; perhaps I too lived in those days."

John Vestall recalled it all, and the wind rustled the sand and whispered a promise in his ears. He looked campward again toward the twinkling eye of the distant fire. He was a dreamer following a dream.

But in the desert dreams came true. In the desert all things were possible.

John Vestall stopped his beautiful white *hujun*, cream of Zeyd's racing camels, and waited for his companions to catch up with him. All morning they had ridden across tawny dunes, and now from the eminence which had been their objective they faced still more of the graceful hills stretched away league on league to a horizon veiled with flying sand. Something was puzzling John Vestall. For hours deep meditation had ridden with him pillion-wise on his high-cantled saddle, but an alien thought had at last forced its way through his preoccupation. There was something strange about this day's ride, something—wrong. What was it? There was the sand, the dazzling sun, the wind. . . .

Ah, that was it—the wind!

John Vestall drew his dark *abba* more closely about him and shivered. Then he turned to the somber dervish at his side.

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**He was a dreamer following a dream. But in the desert dreams  
come true. In the desert all things were possible**

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"How is this, Furtak?" he said wonderingly. "It is high noon, but the wind is piercing."

But Furtak said nothing, and as they plunged down the eastern side of the dune John Vestall found this new phenomenon occupying his attention to the exclusion of all else.

THEY were in the middle of the ghastly Arabian desert. It was summer; the sun blazed; the sands drove under the lash of the wind of the waste; but this wind which seemingly blew straight westward from the red-hot Oman coast was *cold*—cold as the blasts that swoop down from the shining peaks of the icy Himalayas!

"Djinnestan!" said Zeyd with a short laugh.

"Even so, *saidi*," replied the dervish.

John Vestall said nothing, but a vague sense of disappointment filled his heart as he looked out over the scene before him. He knew not what he had expected, but certainly it had been more than this sight of an expanse of smooth sand, barren and lifeless, blood-red in the sunset glow. In the distance rose the flanks of precipitous buttes.

Furtak evidently sensed Vestall's state of mind.

"It is not what you thought to find, O *Feringhi*!"

"Hardly."

The dervish smiled.

"You will find more," he said. "At least you will admit that we seem to be near the realm of supernatural things. The *sarsar* blows colder than ever."

"The *sarsar*. What is that?"

"It is the wind of death, *saidi*," said Furtak solemnly. "That which has its birth in the lowermost halls of Eblis; that which spreads pestilence and destruction abroad over all the earth; that which is the natural atmosphere of all evil things."

Zeyd laughed again, but his laughter sounded somewhat forced. The dervish was right. John Vestall had ceased to wonder about the phenomenon of the icy wind through which they had ridden for four weary days. Unable to explain it,

he had dismissed it as a matter of little importance. But now the insistent sweep of the gale reminded him again of its anomaly. He turned eagerly to the dervish, but before he could speak Zeyd forestalled him.

"You must be either mad or a fool, dervish," said the sheik. "Who now believes in the old tales of the caliphs? If this is your 'wind of death' we should have all been dead long ago."

Furtak was unruffled.

"The tales of the caliphs," said he, "are not the only ones to mention the *sarsar*. It is only the name which is unfamiliar. Read in the books of the *Feringhi*, read of those men who have come face to face with the spirits of those who have died an evil death. One and all have affirmed that the apparition of a specter is always attended by an icy atmosphere that freezes the very marrow of the bones. Is this not so, O Master?"

John Vestall nodded; he had heard of that circumstance. But Zeyd's skepticism was unshaken.

"My second objection still remains unanswered," he said haughtily.

"O you of no faith!" snapped the dervish, "—you would not believe even though a *Djinni* should appear before your very eyes. We live—true, but that is because the breath of the *sarsar* is mingled with the pure winds of Allah's heaven. No man, though, can breathe of the *sarsar's* real essence."

"Where does it come from?" asked Vestall. He was tired of these disputes between the dervish and the Bedouin.

"ALLAH alone in heaven and Eblis alone on earth know the place of its birth," replied Furtak. "Generated in the very bowels of the earth, it works its fatal way up through subterranean halls to the naked rocks of Djinnestan whence it is diffused through all the world. Not far from here there is a cave—"

"A cave!" Vestall was all attention.

"I know what you are thinking, *saidi*. Yes, it is the cave of your vision. See—barely seven hours' ride from here."



Vestall's eager eyes followed the dervish's gaunt finger. Searching along the base of the frowning hills they at last caught sight of a shadow, blacker than other shadows, low down at the foot of a gigantic butte.

"There," said Furtak, "is the entrance to that place which is called Djinnestan. This waste of sand is only debatable ground."

"Let us hasten," cried John Vestall. His coldness had vanished. He was all afire now that the end of his quest was in plain sight. Onaida! . . . before the new day dawned he would know the truth of his visions. He tapped his beast with the camel-stick, but the dervish laid a re-

short arc barely three feet long on the side that faced toward the darkening east. A small brazier of smoking incense stood in the very center of the circle. Zeyd squatted by his *hujun* watching these preparations contemptuously.

"DRAW your saber, *saidi*," said the dervish to Vestall, "and station yourself in the little gap of the circle. On you falls the burden of its defense. Not for your life must you step beyond the limits of the circle; not for your life must you allow anything to enter."

"What is this?" growled the Bedouin. "If there is fighting to be done do you think that a Beni Wassar will sit idle?"

**"Draw your saber, *saidi*," said the dervish. "Not for your life must you step beyond the limits of the circle; not for your life must you allow anything to enter"**

straining hand with firmness upon his arm.

"Not so fast, *saidi*. There is danger."

"Danger?"

"Truly. Do you think, even though the time has expired and the hour of *her* deliverance is at hand, that the *Djinn* will willingly give up their prey? They will do their best to dispute our passage. Once in the cave's mouth we are safe, but between that place and this are many miles."

"*Wellah!*" scorned Zeyd. "How this fellow talks! There is nothing between us and those hills but an empty plain."

But John Vestall was not scornful. He got down from his *hujun* and again addressed the dervish.

"Do what seems best to you," he said.

THE dervish had already opened his large wallet. From it he took a little horn box, filled with an aromatic powder.

"We must meet them here, *saidi*," he said, "between the dunes and the plain where our strength and theirs is equally balanced. We must give them no advantage. I know the *Djinn*."

"What are you going to do?" asked John Vestall curiously.

"Protect us against attack from every side," replied Furtak. Soon he had completed his strange task. Around the men and camels he had traced a large circle in the sand, a circle broken only by a

"Here you cannot help, O Sheik," said Furtak curtly as Vestall took up his position, blade in hand. "How can you fight that which you are not able to see?"

Zeyd spat in disgust but nevertheless he made no further move. Vestall saw the dervish walk toward the brazier and crouch down in the sand. There was an ominous tenseness in the air. Darkness had fallen rapidly; only in the west was the sky lightened by a few lurid bars of crimson; the icy breath of the *sarsar* blew more strongly. Was it imagination, or did John Vestall actually hear far in the east a trampling as of mighty feet?

"On guard!" cried the dervish. "They come!"

Blackness rushed upon the little group with the swoop of the wind. In a moment only the flickering heart of the brazier could be seen. But John Vestall knew that all around was a silent assemblage of invisible shapes. The ebon night pulsed with evil presences.

The *Djinn* were come. John Vestall gripped his saber and waited.

Behind him he heard a low, wild chant in a tongue which he did not understand. It was the dervish. Then something else diverted the American's attention. There was a shuffling in the darkness somewhere off to his right, then a tremendous thudding followed by a sharp crack as if

some one had fired a pistol. With a thump a heavy body fell upon the sand.

"On guard!" came again from the dervish. Then the chanting rose again more wildly than ever.

From the darkness in front of John Vestall's straining eyes a shape began to take outline.

Unbelievably malevolent, fiery eyes stared through the murk toward him. He saw the dim suggestion of a huge, misshapen body, of long, shadowy arms that gripped something, raised it on high. It caught the red gleam of the brazier and John Vestall saw that it was a sword. It descended. . . .

**I**N MOMENTS such as this the human brain is transcended; its consciousness reels through illimitable voids of time. The demonic blade fell like a thunderbolt but while it swooped John Vestall thought of many things. Terror flashed through his mind; the appalling thought that he could not raise his own sword in time to ward off that murderous stroke. He thought of flight. He heard with painful distinctness the fierce chant of the dervish. Then he thought of Onaida. His mind steadied itself; his blade swept up.

All this in that space of time it had taken for the other weapon to fall. . . .

Steel clashed on steel. Vestall experienced a numbing shock. But his parry had been successful. He set himself to meet a similar attack.

But it did not come.

Force had failed. Instantly John Vestall became aware that the Thing outside the circle was now attacking him with all the strength of its mighty will.

He was fainting. . . .

Time was shattered and went slithering down into the fragments of the broken, forgotten eons. He had stood there for centuries gazing into those flaming orbs, resisting with all the power of his soul his almost uncontrollable impulse to retreat.

Just one step . . . one little backward step. . . .

It would be so easy.

But just as the last remnant of John Vestall's will flickered down into defeat before that of his formidable adversary, just as one nerveless foot began to drag backward through the sand, he heard a mighty shout from the rear. The wild

chanting of the dervish suddenly ceased.

"Thou hast won!"

It was even as he had said. The clutching fingers that had wound themselves benumbingly about John Vestall's brain withdrew themselves, the malignant eyes faded away into the darkness. And then light sprang up as Furtak began to throw carefully hoarded sticks into his brazier.

John Vestall saw that the space without the circle was empty now of all but the stars and the whispering sand. He sank down upon his knees.

"You have won!" cried the dervish. His arms went about Vestall's fainting form.

"Another moment and I—should have yielded," gasped the American.

"But you won. . . ."

"What trickery is this?" It was the voice of Zeyd.

"Trickery, Zeyd? Did you not see the eyes—of the Djinni?"

"I saw nothing."

"Of course not," said Furtak. His voice was grim. "O Sheik, you have not the vision. But what do you say of the *hujun*?"

John Vestall looked too. Half in and half out of the protective circle lay the carcass of his own white camel, its neck twisted at a grotesque angle, its skull smashed to a gory red pulp.

"Are you not glad, O Zeyd," said the dervish maliciously, "that *you* did not stray outside the circle?"

But to this the Bedouin made no answer.

**S**OMEWHERE in that desert John Vestall had become separated from his companions. For hours he had walked through the black night clinging to Zeyd's stirrup, disdaining the latter's entreaties for him to ride. He wanted to think and action spurred his thought. But the wind had come booming down, icily cold, and had pelted the party with flying sand that stung like needles. Even the stars had been obscured. And then Vestall had stumbled over some obstacle, had lost his grip on Zeyd's stirrup, and in a moment had gone whirling away over and over in the grasp of that relentless blast that raved at him and buffeted him until he was utterly confused. Not even his shouting could help him; his cries were scarcely audible to his own ears.

So he had staggered on against the wind. At least he had that to guide him. Keep

on eastward and he would come in time to that dark wall of rock he had seen from the edge of the dunes. He fought his way onward until in the dim east he saw the first glow of dawn spring into being above the shadow of ponderous cliffs.

He was very near now, he believed, to that cave.

But his strength was rapidly failing him, and at last he fell in the sand. The wind snatched at his garments savagely.

He could not have lain there for more than a few minutes for when he opened his eyes again he saw that the pale dawn was still low in the eastern sky. Some one was shaking him by the shoulder.

He looked up stupidly. It was Furtak the dervish, kneeling at his side.

"Come, *saidi*," said the man. "Only a few steps farther."

Then he rose and felt some one else take his other arm.

That was the Bedouin. His eyes held a strange expression, that of a man who has looked on unbelievable things.

"You found the cave?" asked John Vestall.

"Yes," replied Zeyd.

And so walking between them Vestall managed to cover the short distance that lay ahead of him. At last his outstretched hand touched the coldness of solid rock.

"Around this spur," spoke the dervish.

"MY FRIEND," said Zeyd earnestly, "I entreat you by our love to turn back."

"But the cave is there?"

"Yes, *saidi*."

"Then I go on," cried Vestall.

Staggering around the corner of the cliff he found himself before the mouth of a cave.

And . . . it was the cave of his vision.

Gloomy and vast in his sight lay the

hall of the columns, no dream now but ponderous reality, its farther recesses obscured by the weird blue luminosity that pervaded the place and seemed to hang, a quivering, intangible curtain, across the entrance. The terrible cold almost caused John Vestall to faint again. But he saw every detail, the polished floor, the vaulted ceiling, the low stone altar. And on the altar lay the woman for whose sake he had wandered across the centuries and the spinning world.

SHE was more beautiful in John Vestall's eyes than ten thousand dreams.

"Onaida!" he cried, "Onaida!"

Impetuously he started forward but the iron arm of the dervish dragged him back.

"Wait!"

"Wait? Why must I wait? Why should I wait? It is she! . . . Onaida! Zeyd—Furtak—do you not see?"

The dervish nodded, but the cool voice of the Bedouin was like a chill on John Vestall's enthusiasm.

"See? See what? I see no woman."

"There, Zeyd—there on the altar!"

"You have lost your wits, my friend," said the sheik calmly. "I

can see nothing on that altar but a skeleton—a pile of dry bones."

"What!"

"Nothing, more, *saidi*. Do not let yourself be deceived any longer. You have been hypnotized by this old villain. Truly there is nothing but a skeleton in that cave. I can trust my eyes."

John Vestall stared at him. Could it be that the Bedouin was right? Had his own mind gone wandering down the dim aisles of madness and illusion? But—there she lay, infinitely desirable in all her lovely panoply of flesh and blood.

"You have not the vision, O Sheik," said the dervish to Zeyd.



Sheik Zeyd's eyes gazed incredulously upon the withered thing that had been his hand

"Vision!" Furtak spat out scornfully.

"You will not believe in what he sees?"

"My eyes tell me what to believe."

"Nor even in the *sarsar*?"

"A curse on your *sarsar*! What is it?—a cold wind, nothing more. There are a dozen natural explanations for such a thing."

At the words the long-suffering patience of the dervish seemed to give way. His eyes blazed wrathfully. But his voice was low; it purred curiously.

"No matter what else you are, O Sheik, you are a brave man. Then *prove* your unbelief with your courage. Thrust your hand into the cave—only your hand, my friend—into the pure exhalation of the wind of death. Perhaps your sense of touch will convince you where your sight will not."

THE sheik's eyes glittered contemptuously. Not deigning to reply he drew back the sleeve of his *abba* and without a moment's hesitation thrust his left hand into the whirling atmosphere of the cavern.

"Allah!"

There was a sharp cry, a sudden movement, and Sheik Zeyd of the Beni Wasar leaped back from the cave mouth, face distorted with pain, eyes gazing incredulously upon the withered thing that had been his hand.

It was shriveled, black, dry, and the fingers were clawed like the talons of a vulture. . . .

"Now do you believe?" cried Furtak exultantly.

But Zeyd said nothing. There was fear in his heart. He looked at his blasted hand and then at those dry bones in the cave. They seemed to mock him."

The dervish turned to Vestall.

"You see, *saidi*," said he, "that it is death to enter that place."

John Vestall was silent. This weird occurrence had shocked him greatly.

"How, if I die," he said at length, "shall I deliver her?"

The dervish's face was grave.

"Would you turn back," he asked, "if I told you that your death was the price of her deliverance? It is her soul that must be delivered—released from the thrall of enchantment that has imprisoned it in her body for so many hundreds of years. You would die . . . but you would release her soul."

"And then?"

"I know not, *saidi*. And if I did—there are things of which one is not permitted to speak. But what is death? Surely nothing for a brave man to fear. And life—the shifting of sands in the desert's emptiness . . . I tell you this, O *Feringhi*—your souls will go forth together. She belongs to you. Will you fail her?"

"No," said John Vestall softly.

He was tired of his quest, tired of the desert, unutterably weary of all things which he had known.

Onaida waited for him. . . .

"Farewell, Furtak," he said, holding out his hand. "I have not the words to thank you—"

The dervish met his clasp.

"There is no need, *saidi*," said he. "I have but performed the will of Allah. Farewell."

John Vestall turned to the silent Zeyd.

"And you, my friend—farewell."

The Bedouin's wild eyes searched the American's face.

"I cannot dissuade you?"

John Vestall shook his head. He knew Zeyd. There would be no entreaties, no hysterical parting.

"No. I must go to her."

Was it a tear that Vestall saw shining on the sheik's brown face? But Zeyd's voice was cool, unemotional as always.

"Farewell, *saidi*," he said.

"*'Isma'llah hawalayna*."

"Farewell—" again. Then at last the Bedouin's calm deserted him. His voice broke harshly.

"Oh, my brother. . . ." he said, and buried his face in his robe.

John Vestall stepped resolutely into the mouth of the cave.

INSTANTLY he felt a sharp agony as the icy breath of the *sarsar* engulfed him—a wave of exquisite torture that made his eyeballs turn inward and choked the breath in his throat. But suddenly the spasm passed and a comfortable warmth seemed to envelop him. He looked up. As if a veil had fallen from his eyes he saw the confines of the cavern become distinct and clear. The incarnate beauty on the altar drew his soul.

In a moment John Vestall stood by her side. He saw her bosom rise and fall. He looked down on the face, on those closed eyelids, purple with *surmch*, fringed with velvet lashes. Strangely he recalled an ancient nursery tale. There had been a

sleeping princess . . . a prince who came to waken her with a kiss. . . .

John Vestall smiled.

He turned his head for a moment; he saw the forms of Zeyd and Furtak as through a blue mist wain against the entrance to the cave. The sheik's face was still covered by his *abba* but Furtak was watching intently.

There was a smile on the dervish's face too.

John Vestall turned again. His face bent over Onaida's—over her sleeping lips. Tenderly he kissed them. They were warm, vibrant with life. She stirred faintly. Then her eyes opened. They were so beautiful. . . . He watched them spell-bound. At last Onaida spoke:

"Come!" she said.

The smile deepened on John Vestall's face as he felt the warmth of her arms. He forgot his surroundings. He knew that all earthly things were slipping away from him.

Slipping like the drifting sands of the lonely desert.

But he cared no longer for earthly things.

**F**OR a long time Zeyd stood there in the dry sand but at last a hand fell upon his shoulder and a voice pierced the turmoil of his mind.

"*Saidi*." It was the dervish.

Zeyd looked up. He was dry-eyed now.

"Well?"

"He has found her."

Once more Zeyd looked into the cave. There was the altar, and on it that same grim travesty of life mocked him still. By it lay John Vestall, one arm embracing the grisly breast. But from the sleeve of the black *abba* protruded glistening bones. The hood enveloped the face of a skull.

There were two skeletons now upon the stone.

Sheik Zeyd of the Beni Wassar looked

at them and then his glance fell upon his own withered hand. Finally his eyes sought the dervish's.

"Who are you?" he said slowly.

"I am only Furtak the dervish," said the other, and Zeyd knew that he would get no other answer.

"And now?"

"We part, *saidi*."

"Where do you go, O Furtak?"

"On—into the desert, *saidi*. I belong there."

"But what of me?"

**Y**OU will return to Mecca. And this time, O Sheik, I think that you will make your pilgrimage without so much doubt and scorn in your heart. Now you know. . . ."

"What?"

"*La illaha illa allah*—there is no god but Allah—"

But the face of Zeyd was proud. He would not show his emotion to any man—no; not even the dervish.

"Farewell, O Furtak," he said abruptly.

"Farewell. . . ."

From the cave mouth Zeyd sat watching the figure of the dervish until he and his camel melted into the lilac shadow of the northern cliffs. Then he turned his own face westward. He shrugged his shoulders as he mounted his own *hujun* but there was no disrespect in the gesture. He rode all day, unconscious of fatigue.

The sun had set when he at last dismounted. He stood thinking deeply for some time, then he took off his *abba* and spread it upon the clean sand. Strange occupation for Zeyd the skeptical! He knelt on the cloth and faced toward Mecca, the Holy City.

It was not until then that he completed the dervish's sentence.

"—*Wa Muhammad er-rassoul allahi*," he said very softly.

In his eyes was a light that had not been there before.

### AS WE PROMISED YOU

There will be another Conan Doyle story in the March issue—a story that ranks as one of the greatest supernatural tales written by masters in that field of literature—

### "MUMMY NUMBER 249"

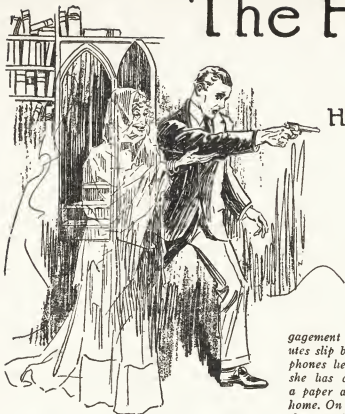
Without any doubt, this story alone is worth the price of the March number of GHOST STORIES, on sale at all news stands, February 20th.

# The House

By

H. THOMPSON

RICH



*Mechanically, like a man going to his doom, Kimball lifted the pistol. "Aim!" cried the phantom*

JOAN, the daughter of a wealthy Los Angeles oil operator, Earle Wingate, calls upon Wayne Kimball at his apartment and begs him to escort her to her home as she is afraid to go alone. Wayne meets her in the lobby and the two start for the Wingate mansion on the outskirts of the city.

En route in the taxi, Joan tries to explain to Wayne that she has felt some strange person or thing following her. Suddenly she is unable to tell him any more and they ride on in comparative silence the rest of the way. Kimball leaves Joan at the gate-entrance to her home after she promises to meet him for lunch the next day and tell him the whole story. She goes into the house and he returns to the curb to find the taxi they had come out in has disappeared.

Thinking little of this incident, Kimball goes back to town. At the door of his

apartment he finds a warning note which says: "Keep out of this—or two will die!" Slightly upset, he inquires whether there has been anyone in to see him but finding that there had not been, he retires.

The next day Joan does not appear to keep her engagement with Wayne. As the minutes slip by, he becomes alarmed and phones her home only to learn that she has disappeared. Kimball buys a paper and starts for the Wingate home. On the way out he reads about the murder of a taxi-driver who answers the description of the strange Russian who drove Joan and him the day before.

Upon his arrival at the austere home of Earle Wingate, he is immediately taken to a study where he meets the master of the house and a detective. They both question him carefully and inform him about the mysterious disappearance of Joan. They tell him that one of their servants, a Jap, is also missing. The chauffeur had reported that Miss Joan had visited a medium, Senora Gonzalo, the afternoon of her strange departure. Kimball decides to visit the woman to see what he can learn.

Senora Gonzalo tells him of the missing girl and where she may be found. Kimball taxis out to a lonely spot. Telling the driver to wait he approaches an old forsaken house strangely half-hidden by fog. He finds the large iron door unlocked. He enters the dark place. Suddenly he is attacked. Wayne tries to get out of the door but it slams behind him and he is trapped. He struggles with a horrible Thing.

Following his opponent about in the dark,



# of the FOG

*Like flies caught in the web of some unearthly spider, Joan and Wayne struggle in the pitiless meshes, and we struggle with them in this engrossing story*



*The grey-headed oil operator was sitting at his desk. Before him were a number of papers*

*he mounts a long stairway. At the top of the stairs he sees Joan. Beside her stands a terrifying Mexican hunchback, his attacker. As he climbs the stairs he has the strange sensation of being on a treadmill. Presently Joan calls down to him in terror. Wayne is being drawn down into a yawning pit!*

**I**N THIS appalling plight, Kimball thought and acted with lightning rapidity. Flinging the match away, he vaulted over the balustrade into the dark, in a blind effort to escape that yawning pit.

Followed a crash on the floor below, a racking pain, then oblivion. . . .

On regaining consciousness, he found himself somewhere in the hollow outside, bathed in that cold, clammy fog.

Rising stiffly, he took a dazed, limping step or two—concluded that there were no bones broken. But his head throbbed dully, as though he had struck it on the floor when he fell. Yet he could feel no welt anywhere.

What was he doing out here? Had that fiend carried him out, or had he groped his own way to freedom? And Joan—what of Joan?

The thought of her still a prisoner in

that house of horror was like a dash of water in his face. He gritted his teeth, rallied his swimming senses, groped off through that shrouding fog.

But though he floundered around for ten minutes or more, he could find no trace of the house. The fog was too thick, he was still too dazed and shaken.

Emerging suddenly on the highway, once more under the clear stars, he saw that he had wandered some distance from the waiting taxi. Its dimmed lights were a heartening beacon in the dark. He turned toward it, resolved to accept the aid of the driver now.

**A**S he approached, he saw the head of the Irishman bent low over the cowl, apparently so absorbed in his book that he had heard no step.

"Sorry to interrupt you," said Kimball, "but I've decided I can use your help after all."

O'Hara, however, made no move to look up.

"Humph!" mused Kimball, with a grim smile. "That fellow can certainly concentrate!"

He spoke again but still the driver made no move.

Then, as he reached the cab, peered in upon the absorbed Irishman, he recoiled with a shock of horror.

THE man was not reading the book. It had fallen to the floor-boards. Nor was he asleep, as one glance at the ghastly face revealed. No, he was not asleep but dead—strangled—as that luckless Russian had been.

Tense seconds ticked off, as Kimball stood there peering in upon the murdered man.

Then slowly, dazedly he turned away—but not back toward the site of that sinister house in the fog. Instead, he moved off down the road whence they had come—moved dully, mechanically like an automaton.

Everything was vague, unreal. An almost overpowering lassitude clung to him—clung to him like that cold, clammy fog. He moved on as though in a dream, a trance . . . .

Poor Joan! She was back there somewhere! But he couldn't save her now. There was no will for it, no energy. His one thought seemed to be to reach the haven of his own apartment, try to clear his mind, think this stupefying thing out.

The helpless girl was in the grip of some ominous, some hideous power, obviously supernatural. That hunchback! Who was he? What did he want with her?

Twice now the fiend had struck, had strangled two innocent men with his vise-like hands. Why? Because they knew the location of that sinister house? Then why had his own life been spared?

No matter. He was more concerned about the others. A heavy sense of responsibility weighed on him. For had he not summoned them both to their deaths?

Particularly this latest murder depressed him. The Russian he hadn't come to know very well, but that genial, open-faced young Irishman—he couldn't bear to think of him dead back there.

As Kimball made his way along the dark, winding ribbon of Michigan Avenue, he glanced nervously over his shoulder from time to time, seeming to sense some invisible pursuer, but could see nothing—nothing but the lynx-eyes of an occasional oncoming car.

And back there was another car, a car that held a grisly secret—a secret that would give the police a jolt, when they found it in the morning, and provide the readers of the afternoon papers with another thrill.

At the intersection where they had turned right, Kimball swung south and caught the trolley. Not for worlds would he have taken another taxi that night, risked another life.

As the trolley neared the Plaza, he got off, walked the rest of the way to his hotel, still with that weird haze clinging to his mind.

Entering the lobby with that same infinite sense of relief he had felt last night, mingled with that same intense weariness, he hastened to his apartment. But as he opened the door and switched on the lights, he looked down apprehensively, as though fearful of finding another of those warning notes there.

There was none, however, and another weight lifted from his mind. Shutting the door and locking it, he dropped into a chair, relaxed his tired body, tried to bring his hazy mind to a focus on this baffling mystery.

Roused by a rap on the door, some minutes later, he sat up straight, every nerve taut. Who could it be? He was expecting no one. How could his caller have gotten up unannounced? What caused that chill of dread to rush over him?

Rising, he went to the door, called out: "Who is it?"

No answer came but the rap was repeated—loud, clawing.

"Who is it?" he shouted. "Speak up!"

Again that clawing rap, this time almost a fist-blow.

Losing no further time, Kimball backed to his desk, caught up an automatic from a drawer. Then, advancing once more, as those challenging blows still shook the door, he unlocked it, flung it open—to face a shadowy figure.

LOWERING his pistol, he stood there petrified, staring at the thing.

Whitish, like that ghostly fog, it nevertheless had human shape. And though the face was vague, blurred, he sensed that it was a woman.

"W-what do you want?" he gasped, retreating into the room.

The specter followed, closing the door.

Twice now the fiend had struck, had strangled two innocent men with his vise-like hands. Why? Because they knew of that sinister house?

"You, Senor Kim-ball! It is *you* I want!"

Though faint, strained, seeming to come from far off, the voice was unmistakable. It was that of the medium! But how could it be? Was he dreaming this?

"What do you want with me, Senora Gonzalo?" he demanded, clutching his pistol for reassurance, levelling it at her.

She waved it aside with a spectral arm.

"You can harm me not with that, senor! But there is one you can harm, one you must kill to-night—the Senor Wingate! You go to his house—you steal inside—you go to his study—you find him there—you kill him!"

The words came in a droning incantation, as though from one in a trance, and as Kimball listened he divined that the shadowy figure before him was but the projected astral body of the medium. She herself was probably back in her studio. It was mesmerism by phantasmic appearance. He had come across references to the phenomenon in his occult researches.

"You hear, Senor Kim-ball?" the weird voice went on. "You understand what I have say?"

He tensed, tried to get hold of himself. He must fight off this deadly spell she was putting on him.

"You are mad, senora!" he cried. "You can't work your murderous game on me! Where is Joan? Answer me! What is this hideous plot, anyway? Who is back of you? What do you want with her?"

"I speak of you, senor, not of the senorita," was the calm reply. "You have heard what I say. You have understood. Go, then, to the father of the senorita—kill him—if you would save her life."

FOR a moment Kimball thought he saw light—horrible light. Wingate himself was back of this! The medium was on their side, trying to help him save Joan. But no, that was impossible. Whatever his faults, Earle Wingate could never be involved in a plot to kidnap his own daughter.

So Kimball took a fresh stand, made a last, supreme effort to defy this mesmeric

phantasm, throw off the witch's spell that threatened to overpower him.

"I refuse! Leave me!" he cried. "And I warn you, Senora Gonzalo, return Joan safely to her home to-night. I'll give you an hour. If she is not back by then, I'll lead the police to your place. You'll sit in the hot chair for this!"

But the answer was a thin, mocking laugh.

"You do not frighten me, senor! The police—have they not already visit me? And what they find? Nothing! So talk to me no more. Go!"

IN VAIN he struggled to dominate this sinister personality with his own. Momentarily he felt himself weakening.

"Yes, you will go, senor," the phantom soothed. "You will go now, at once."

She stepped to the door, opened it.

A last despairing moment Kimball struggled, feeling his will ooze out in the drops of cold perspiration that beaded his brow. "Go!"

There was no resistance left in his tired brain.

"Yes, senora—I go."

And shoving his pistol into his pocket, he stepped through the door, stole down the corridor like a thief in the night—like a murderer, rather, the one thought in his hypnotized mind now to kill Earle Wingate.

As he crossed the lobby, Carlos hailed him.

"You go out again, senor, without the dinner? It is already late."

"Yes, I know, but I'm not hungry."

And with that, like a walker in his sleep, he passed on through the lobby, stepped out into the night once more. A taxi swung up to the curb, hailed him—but Kimball waved it away with a shudder, and continued on afoot.

It was a long walk. It should have cleared his head, shaken that eerie haze away. But the spell the medium had put on him was too strong. He continued on, abstracted, with only one grim purpose in mind.

Once or twice he seemed to rouse, hesi-

tate, half-turn back—but always there was the sense of a shadowy presence just behind, barring retreat, urging him on.

So at last Kimball reached Los Feliz Road, warily approached the Wingate place.

Its stone turrets and corbels stood out dark, repelling, against the purple sky. Under the starlight, the dim figure of a patrolman could be seen pacing back and forth, back and forth, across the land-scaped terraces.

**KIMBALL** paused, seemed to rouse again from that hypnotic spell, while a sense of relief swept over him—for how could he hope to penetrate this fortress?

But again there was the sense of that shadowy presence just behind him. This time, as he turned nervously, he saw it.

"Follow me!" spoke the phantasm.

Numbly he followed—through the gate, around the edge of the terraces, skulking like a shadow from shrub to shrub.

Now his spectral guide mounted a side porch, pointed to a screened window. Reaching it, Kimball pressed his palms against the screen, pushed gently up.

It rose—and he pushed through, followed the phantasm inside.

The way led through a long, dark reception-room to the great dim-lit Norman hall, with its rough-hewn ceiling beams and its feudal trappings on the walls.

Kimball had been ushered into this hall that very afternoon by Lieutenant Mackay's courteous patrolman and knew the way, but still the phantasm led on.

They mounted the great oaken staircase, proceeded silently toward that small tower room that was Earle Wingate's private

study. The door was partly open and through it Kimball could see the gray-haired, esthetic-faced oil operator seated at his desk.

Before him were a number of papers. He was looking at one he held in his hand; his head rested on the other. Wingate was a sad-looking man.

Pity rose in Kimball's heart for this stricken father. His mind, enslaved though it was to the medium's will, revolted against this cold-blooded murder of a defenseless, innocent man. He turned imploring eyes on the shadowy presence beside him but she shook her head.

"Senor Kim-ball, do not weaken!" came the chill whisper. "Lift your pistol!"

Mechanically, like a man going to his doom, he lifted it.

"Aim!"

He levelled the weapon on that unsuspecting figure. Yet was Wingate altogether unsuspecting? With a surge of hope, Kimball saw him stir, lift his head, listen.

"Now fire—quick!" hissed the phantasm.

Hope dying, he pressed the trigger—but even as the shot crashed out, his hand shook with revulsion. He had missed! Thank God, he had missed!

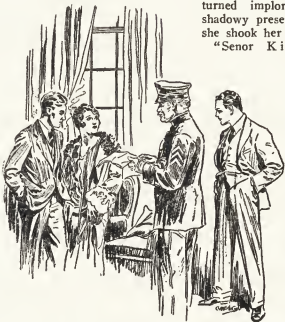
But no—for amid the echoes, he heard a cry ring out—saw Wingate grip the desk, half-rise, slump weakly to the floor.

No, he had not missed.

Clutching that smoking pistol with a groan of horror, Kimball wheeled, staggered to the stairs, plunged down, groped his way back through the dark reception-room to the open window—dove through, raced down the terraces.

Behind him, the house was in an uproar. Lights were flashing up. Shouts sounded. Shots rang out.

Intent only on escaping that pandemo-



*While the detective showed Mrs. Wingate and her son the note, Kimball watched them closely*

nium, his mind still in a daze, he ran on. But now a figure sprang from behind a shrub, tackled him. They went down together, rolled and struggled on the ground.

Whoever his assailant was, he was young, strong. The patrolman? No, for he wore no uniform. That much he could tell, as they struggled there. Now the fellow was grappling for the pistol. His hand reached it, with a panting gasp he wrenched it away—and in that moment Kimball shoved him off, leaped to his feet. Dashing off, as shots spat after him, he gained the gate, lunged through it, and disappeared into the night.

An hour later, haggard, weary, he reached his hotel by a roundabout way, went to his apartment. With shaking hands he undressed, stumbled to bed, and sank into a heavy, exhausted sleep.

Along toward dawn Kimball awoke, lay

it! But no, some one might have stolen it. Stranger things had happened, recently.

There was another check on the thing. If he had left his apartment again last night, after coming in the first time, Carlos would remember. The little Mexican had hailed him as he went out, or he'd dreamed he did.

He moved toward the telephone, then paused, recalling that Carlos was the night clerk and wouldn't be on duty now.

**B**UT there were other ways of finding out. He could call the Wingate place, for instance! Again he paused.

No, that wouldn't do! Instead, he'd wait. It was almost noon now. By the time he could dress and get lunch, the early editions of the afternoon papers would be on the stands. There would be the proof!

So Kimball walked to his bathroom like

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**Better come out with the truth himself, Wayne thought, tell the whole weird story, put the police on the right trail. But no—  
they'd never believe him**

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staring up at the ceiling in the gray light, as the grisly scenes of the night before hovered like phantoms in his mind.

It had been a nightmare, he concluded with a shudder. And so, comforted, he turned over, fell asleep once more. When again he awoke, it was broad daylight. He had slept long, but felt strangely unrefreshed and his head ached dully, though his mind seemed clear enough now.

But what ghastly dreams!

Suddenly he sat up, tense. *Had* they been dreams? That harrowing episode there at the last, when he had gone to the home of Earle Wingate—had that been just a nightmare, or had it really happened? And what of Joan, that hair-raising episode of the house in the fog—had that too been just a nightmare?

**I**F these things were but dreams, where then did reality begin? Had Joan ever disappeared in the first place? Was anything of the whole ghoully sequence real?

Well, there was one way of finding out if the Wingate part of it was real, anyway. Rising, he went to his desk, pulled open a drawer where he kept his automatic. The weapon was not there. Well, that settled

a man in a suspended state of animation—or rather, like a condemned man awaiting execution, who hopes to get a reprieve from the Governor—for in his heart, he felt that the whole grim thing had really happened.

But a cold shower revived his spirits. Then he ate a hearty breakfast. Stepping almost lightly down into the lobby, he saw that the early editions of the afternoon papers were indeed out—but all his lightness left him when he read their headlines.

There were two stories, both sensational. Earle Wingate had been shot last night in his home by a mysterious assailant. That was one. The other was that an Irish taxi-cab driver, Dan O'Hara by name, had been found strangled at the very spot where the Russian, Serge Marinoff, had met his death twenty-four hours before.

Agitatedly, Kimball bought a copy of the *Herald-Post* and sat down over it.

The millionaire oil operator had not been killed, he read. Fired on from behind, as he sat at his study desk last night, he might have received the bullet in the heart but for the fact that he had turned at the last moment, hearing something. The result was that he had been struck in the left shoulder. He was in no danger.

Kimball sighed in relief. Let them think that was the reason, if they wanted to. But in his own heart, he knew Earle Wingate was alive because his hand had shaken with revulsion, at the moment he pressed the trigger.

The police were holding the family chauffeur, Jim Hunter, the story went on. He had been found on the lawn by a patrolman guarding the premises—and in his hand had been discovered a still smoking automatic pistol, its clip empty.

So that was who his assailant had been!

**H**UNTER testified that he had been sitting on a bench beside the garage when he saw a man emerge from a window on a side porch and had dashed across the terraces, grappled with him. He told of the struggle, of getting the pistol, firing it after his captive, who got away.

Kimball knew the story was true, of course, but the police scoffed at it. The chauffeur was back of the whole thing, they felt. The way they reconstructed it, he was in league with the missing Japanese butler and had broken into the house to force a ransom out of his employer for the return of his daughter—but had fired accidentally, out of nervousness, when Wingate had started to turn—then had fled, inventing an imaginary assailant to explain the situation.

Well, let the police think what they wanted! He hated to see an innocent man in trouble that way—but perhaps Hunter wasn't so innocent. What was he doing out there, anyway? Had he really seen him emerge from that window? Why had he not seen him enter it?

Suddenly the thought came that this thing had been planned as a trap. The chauffeur knew he had come to the house to shoot Earle Wingate and had been placed there to catch him, but had bungled, let him get away—only to fall into the trap himself.

But that pistol! If the police ever traced it back, they'd find out quick enough Hunter was not its owner and the chauffeur's story would be established.

A chill went down Kimball's spine. Better come out with the truth himself, tell the whole weird story, put the police on the right trail. But no—they'd never believe him. He'd only land himself in jail, prevent all possibility of following the trail himself.

Why, though, were the police so quick

to suspect Hunter? Why did they utterly refuse to credit his story? Because they had something else on him, it came over Kimball in a flash—something they weren't divulging to the papers.

What?

There was one way of finding out, at least. That was to pay another visit to Earle Wingate! To furnish a plausible excuse for going, he would reveal a little more of what he knew. He wanted to throw added suspicion on the medium, without involving himself too deeply, and this he held it in his power to do.

Twenty minutes later, he was at the Wingate residence. At the door, he was greeted by that same agreeable young officer of the day before, led promptly into the presence of Lieutenant Mackay in that familiar tower room above, which he was evidently using as his headquarters.

"I came to see how Mr. Wingate is getting along," said Kimball, when they had shaken hands and exchanged the customary greetings.

"Fine—couldn't be better, considering," was the reply. "And was that all you came for?" eyeing him quizzically.

"Not quite!" Kimball reached into his pocket, drew forth a folded piece of paper. "Read that."

Mackay did—to lift his bristly eyebrows, give a low whistle—for it was that warning note:

KEEP OUT OF THIS—OR  
TWO WILL DIE!

"Say, where did you get that?" he demanded.

Kimball told him of finding it underneath his door, omitting to mention that the discovery had occurred not last night but the night before.

"And who do you think wrote it?"

"I think Senora Gonzalo wrote it!"

**T**HE lieutenant scowled. "Why do you keep dragging her into this?"

"Because I think she belongs in it."

"But why? How? What's her motive?"

"That remains to be seen."

"But we've combed her place. Where could she be keeping Miss Wingate?"

"That too remains to be seen."

"All right, we'll check up on this note then," pocketing it. "Was that all?"

Kimball smiled, for he had anticipated this, had made a copy of the note.

"Not quite. I wanted to ask you a question or two. As you know, I'm trying to



untangle this mystery myself, in my own amateur way, because of my—well, my friendship for Joan.”

“Yes, I know. I understand. Fire away, my boy. What would you like to know?”

Kimball took a deep breath. “I would like to know what else you’ve got on Hunter.”

Mackay gave a start, at this. His gray eyes narrowed. “What makes you think we’ve got anything else on him?”

“Because the account in the papers doesn’t add up right. Why do you refuse to believe the fellow’s story? It sounds perfectly logical.”

Followed a long moment’s silence, while the detective stood debating.

“YOU’RE pretty smart, aren’t you?” he growled at length. “And honest, I guess. One good turn deserves another, eh? Well, here it is. We’ve located the Jap—and he’s blown Hunter’s original story sky high.”

It was Kimball’s turn to give a start. So they’d caught Yoshida!

“What did he have to say?” he asked.

“That he’d been investigating the case himself. That he was still on the premises, when Hunter brought the car home that afternoon—and that he brought it home without Miss Wingate.”

Whew! That was indeed news!

“But what did Hunter say? Denied it, of course?”

“No, admitted it. Said he’d lied before—that after they left the medium’s place, he’d driven the girl to a Hollywood tea-room known as the Blue Poppy, where he’d left her to keep a rendezvous with some one, promising to keep it quiet. That was why he’d lied, he said.”

Kimball clenched his teeth. This was beginning to look funny. “And you’ve checked up on his story?”

“Yes. My men visited the tea-room and talked with the proprietor, an old maid by the name of Agatha Terrill.”

“And what did she say?”

“Admitted Miss Wingate had been there that afternoon—said she’d met some man there.”

Kimball suffered a pang. “Who?” he asked tensely.

“She didn’t know—but we’ve got a clue! The guy came there once with another woman, some one Miss Terrill knew. She’s given us the name. If we can find that woman, we can locate the man—and when

we get him, we’ll have the one we want.

“Well, that’s the low-down,” continued Mackay. “But keep it dark, see?”

“Yes, I’ll keep it dark. You can count on me.”

Kimball scarcely knew he had spoken. Who was this man Joan had kept that rendezvous with? Why had she met him there? Why had she told Hunter to make no mention of the fact?

Suddenly he brightened. She had wanted to tell him something, that afternoon she called upon him—something else besides about the hunchback—but had been too distraught. But she had promised to tell him the next day, when she met him for lunch—and would have done so, had she been able to keep the appointment.

This thought revived his spirits somewhat. He breathed easier. Perhaps Mackay was right. Perhaps this man was back of it after all. But if he was, then he was back of Senora Gonzalo too! She was the arch agent of this sinister plot—the medium, in the fullest sense of the word.

As this conclusion came, Kimball was almost tempted to tell the detective the whole truth—but something held him back.

“When are you going to see Senora Gonzalo about that note?” he asked, thoughtfully. “I’d like to come along, if you don’t mind.”

“Right away,” was the reply. “Come along if you want.”

“What note? What note was that, Lieutenant?”

Recognizing the voice of Carter Blake, Kimball turned—and there stood the sallow youth in the doorway. Beside him stood his mother, the second Mrs. Wingate.

How long had they been standing there? How much of this had they heard?

HE WAS glad now he hadn’t told Mackay all he knew. This pair—he instinctively mistrusted them, somehow.

As for Blake, he admitted he had a personal interest in Joan. Well, let him—the fool! One thing was certain, it wasn’t returned. But that very fact might be the motive. While as for his mother—well, with Joan out of the way, she would have come into old Wingate’s fortune, had that bullet gone true last night.

But what of the chauffeur, the butler? What of that mysterious some one Joan had kept the rendezvous with? And what of that ghostly hunchback and his sinister

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**What was Joan doing there, in that deserted monastery? The past forty-eight hours had been one long drugged dream, with moments of hideous nightmare**

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house in the fog? How did all these jumbled pieces of the fantastic puzzle fit together, anyway?

The detective showed Mrs. Wingate and her son the note. Kimball watched them closely. He thought he saw them exchange significant glances, but couldn't be sure. Perhaps it was only that they were startled by its blunt message.

"YOU say you found this under your door, Mr. Kimball?" said Mrs. Wingate, regarding him fixedly. "Dear me, what a chill it must have given you! And have you any idea who put it there?"

"Yes, I have."

He fancied a tremor passed over her. If it did, it vanished almost instantly, under an iron control. At any rate, one thing was certain—she was not as artless as she looked.

"Who do you think put it there?" she asked.

"The medium—Senora Gonzalo."

"That's right!" declared Blake. "That's what I think, Mother. You know, Mr. Kimball, I never approved of Joan going to her."

"No? Well, it seems you were right."

"So really, Lieutenant," turning to Mackay, "I think we're on the trail at last, thanks to Mr. Kimball. You're going over right away, I understand?"

"Yes, right away."

"Then I think I'll come along, if you don't mind. Want to come too, Mother?"

"No, Carter—no thank you. I'm not much of a detective, I fear." Whereupon Mrs. Wingate withdrew, flounced out of the room like some elaborate middle-aged mechanical doll. Either this naive, almost childish woman was under some strange spell herself or she was playing some deep, deep game.

On the way over to the medium's place, in Lieutenant Mackay's car, Kimball tried to figure the thing out. Blake, too, he was coming to believe, was less of a fool than he looked. Were he and his mother really of two opinions about Senora Gon-

zalo, or had that dialogue been cleverly feigned? And poor Joan! What chance was there of finding her, amid all this weird maze of clues?

"Courage, darling!" he whispered, trying to send the thought out to her. "Be brave, be patient! I'll find you, save you—or die in the attempt!"

Arriving outside the tumble-down adobe they left the car, knocked on the medium's door—pushed on in, for it was never shut.

"Ah, senors!" came a purring voice, as she popped out of her alcove. "Why I have such honor?"

While her question was addressed to all of them, her eyes sought Blake's—covertly, questioningly—or so at least it seemed to Kimball.

"We want a specimen of your handwriting, senora," said Mackay, coming to the point at once.

"My handwriting?"

That gave her a start. There was no doubt about it.

"Yes. Sit down."

He indicated a table in the alcove. Nervously the medium complied.

"Now write," handing her a pencil and a piece of paper.

"What I write, senor?"

"Keep out of this—or two will die!"

"What—what you say?" She gave a violent start, this time. "What you mean, two will die?"

"Never mind what I meant! Write it—just what I said."

He repeated the words of that grim note.

"BUT senor," pulling herself together, smiling now, "I write not the Eenglish."

Which was exactly what Kimball had known she would say. Turning to the detective, he said: "Then have her write it in Spanish!"

Mackay repeated the order, while Senora Gonzalo glared daggers.

"Very well," picking up the pencil at last. "I write!" She wrote—rapidly, wrathfully—held out the paper.

The detective took it, compared it with the original note.

"Absolutely different, I'd say," he admitted at length, reluctantly, as the medium sat there in sullen triumph. "What do you think, Mr. Kimball?"

One glance sufficed to tell. Whereas the original note had been written in a blunt, almost childish scrawl, this one was pencilled in fine, delicate lines, with characteristic latin scrolls and flourishes.

"Different, beyond a doubt," he pronounced, handing them back.

"Let's have a look," said Blake.

Mackay passed over the notes to him.

"Yes, absolutely different," he agreed, after a moment's study, in turn handing them back.

The detective put the notes in his pocket, retrieved his pencil from the medium's table.

"Why you have made me write those words, senior?" asked the woman as she rose.

"Oh, just a little notion," he smiled.

"And I can do something else, yes?"

"No, nothing else."

"Then *adios*, seniors!"

She bowed them to the door, black eyes smouldering.

"Wow—she's a wildcat, all right!" exclaimed Mackay, as they stepped outside. "But not our kitty, I guess."

"No, I guess not," Blake admitted, with seeming reluctance. "Well, it was worth a try, anyway. As I say, I always mistrusted the old girl. But apparently the bark is worse than the bite—eh, Kimball?"

"You're getting your animals mixed, aren't you?" was the reply.

"THAT'S right, so I am. Well, anyway, if you'll excuse me I'll hop along. Got one or two little things to do downtown. So long, Kimball. So long, Lieutenant."

Whereupon the youth departed.

"Funny thing about those damn' notes," Mackay was saying, as Kimball stood looking after him with an expression of distaste

and perplexity on his face. "They don't match at all—but she sure looked guilty."

"Yes, very!"

The detective was fishing around in his pocket now, while slowly a puzzled look came over him.

"Hello! Say—those notes are gone!"

"Gone? You're sure?"

"Yes, gone! And I remember Blake handing them back to me as well as anything. That damn' medium—she's a witch!"



KIMBALL made no comment. He still had the original one. And the other one didn't prove anything. Matter-of-fact, he'd still concede for the sake of the argument that Senora Gonzalo might have written both of them. Anyone can disguise his handwriting if he tries, particularly in a foreign language.

His real object in producing the note had been to use it as an *entrée* to the Wingate place, in his quest for information, and this object had certainly been served. Therefore, he felt no sense of loss. And if Mackay thought the mere disappearance of a couple of notes right from under his eyes was funny—well, he could tell him funnier ones than that!

For instance:

"Have you stopped to think, Lieutenant, that there might be some connection between the disappearance of Miss Wingate and the murder of those two taxi-cab drivers?"

"Why, no!" The detective almost jumped out of his shoes. "Good God, no! Why? What possible connection could there be?"

"I don't know, exactly," Kimball told him. "But if you wouldn't mind driving out there, I'd sort of like to look around."

Mackay didn't mind, so they drove out. The sun was still up when they arrived—and there was that little pocket on the far side of the road, just as Kimball had seen it that night—but there was no fog, now, and absolutely no trace of any house.

"Speaking about disappearances!" he

muttered, half to himself, as they turned back to the car.

"What?"

"Nothing. I was just thinking."

And as they drove away from that lonely spot, an icy chill crept over him. Poor Joan! Where was she now?

Had Kimball but known it, he had been literally within sight of Joan, when he was out there in that empty hollow.

**F**ROM a window in a cell of a deserted monastery that dated from Spanish times—a crumbling ruin high up on a hill beyond—she had looked down and seen the car drive up, seen him get out with Lieutenant Mackay, seen them wander around, looking over the ground.

For a moment, at that sight, her heart had beat high with hope—only to sink, when he had left the scene with the detective and the car had driven off.

What was Joan doing there, in that deserted monastery? She scarcely knew, everything was so vague, so unreal. The past forty-eight hours had been one long drugged dream, with moments of hideous nightmare—as for instance, when she had seen Wayne mounting those treadmill stairs of that ghostly house below—a house she knew didn't really exist at all, since she could look out now and see that it was not there.

She shuddered, recalling that horror. It was all a part of the terrible occult powers of her hunchback jailer—Senor Miguel Alvarez, a mad Mexican scholar of fifty years ago—and of the wicked Senora Gonzalo, who had materialized this sinister ghost.

Yes, and more, it was all a part of some deep, diabolical plot—something that had been brewing, brewing—something she had suspected vaguely for a long while, yet had been powerless against.

It was her step-mother's doing and that of her son, Carter Blake. This much she knew—felt sure of, at least. Oh, if only she had gone to her father with her suspicions, long ago!

Instead, she had gone to Senora Gonzalo, seeking to get into communication with her mother—and the day before yesterday had succeeded, had learned through that terrible message that the second Mrs. Wingate had killed her mother—had poisoned her!

It was this dreadful truth that had staggered her, sent her from the medium's

dazed. She scarcely remembered where she had gone then. Oh, yes—to the Blue Poppy!—and again she shuddered, as though recalling another horror.

Then, on leaving there, she'd had the first sense of being followed—trailed by that hideous hunchback. For blocks she'd walked, trying to throw him off. Finally she'd called a taxi, given her address and told the driver to take her home—but the ghost of Senor Alvarez had got in too, countermanded the order, and the cab had headed back down town, drawn up outside Senora Gonzalo's psychic parlors.

There the hunchback had got out, turned to help her after him—but she'd plunged out the other door, fled across the Plaza to Wayne's hotel, that gruesome specter close at her heels.

Entering the lobby, she'd gone to the nearest telephone, called him, begged him to come down—to help her, to save her—and he had come, in time. But he hadn't been able to save her. The driver had not taken them where Wayne had told him but where the hunchback had directed him.

Vaguely she recalled a long, rambling drive through the dusk, the spell settling deeper and deeper—and with a feeling of despair had realized that Wayne was under it too.

She remembered his urging her to tell him what she had started to—about that terrible message from her mother—remembered how she couldn't bear to mention it at the moment and had made an appointment to meet him for lunch the next day.

**E**VERYTHING had grown still vaguer. It seemed the cab had stopped outside her home and they had got out, gone through the gate. They had parted there, it seemed, and she had gone on into the house. She recalled Toyo standing in the open doorway. But the next moment she was still in the cab, alone with Senor Alvarez now, and it was heading down Los Feliz Road to Michigan Avenue. It had stopped and she'd been led out, across the road, into a strange, clammy fog.

What had happened to the driver she didn't know. The last she saw of him, he was sitting there beside the wheel, waiting.

She was led into a horrible, ghostly house in the fog—led down into a pit below the stairs, a chamber of horrors that chilled her blood—on through a long,

dank passage that mounted to the monastery, where she had been taken to the cell she now occupied, and locked in.

Collapsing on the narrow cot she found there, she had fallen into a heavy, exhausted sleep. When she awoke, it was morning. Warm sunshine streamed in through her narrow, barred window. She looked out, saw where she was—but of that ghostly house below, she saw no sign.

Food was brought to her by Senora Gonzalo. She tried to talk to her but the medium would have nothing to say—nothing, only:

"Wait! You will not be harmed, senorita."

**A**NOTHER night came, her third away from home. Slowly a whitish, shadowy figure began materializing beside her cot.

The figure seemed to be that of a woman, though the face was vague, blurred.

"Arise, senorita!" came a faint, strained voice. "Come with me!"

The medium! But what did it mean? Was she dead? Had the hunchback killed her? Was this her ghost?

Obedient to the command, seeming to lack all will to resist, Joan arose. Now the shadowy figure advanced toward the table, pointed down to it—and looking, though there seemed to be no light in the room, Joan saw a dagger lying there, drew back with a gasp.

"Pick it up!" came the almost inaudible command.

Like some one in a trance, Joan complied. As she touched that sharp, cold steel, a shiver ran through her.

"Now come!"

The shadowy figure led the way to the door. It was open, though she knew it had been locked when she lay down after dinner. They stepped out.

Like two ghosts, rather than one, they sped silently down the long stone corridors of the ruined monastery—emerged into the clear night air of the hollow.

Thence the way led out over the long, dark ribbon of lonely road—down, through

suburbs vague but familiar—all the while that ghostly figure at her side, all the while that grim knife pressed against the folds of her dress.

Like a dream, it was—a horrible nightmare that could never be real, yet as she stumbled on, Joan knew somehow it must be real, knew that she must be under another spell.

But why—why was she being led out like this, in the middle of the night? Where was she going?

On and on, on and on. Till at length the answer to one question came—for now she saw the cold, dark turrets of her father's home loom up ahead. Giddy joy swept over Joan, at that familiar sight. They were bringing her back . . . freeing her! But she was being led around to the rear gate!

"Quick—this way!" whispered her ghostly guide.

They stole through the gate, as a patrolman passed out of sight on his round—a rush to a kitchen window followed—like a burglar Joan raised the screen, slipped inside.

Deeper and deeper now in the power of another will, she stole from room to room of that dark house, behind that shadowy figure . . . Now the way led upstairs, down a dark hall—and presently, she found herself outside her step-mother's room.

"Open the door!" whispered the voice.

She opened it, trembling with a horrible premonition, advanced into the room of the sleeping woman. At her bedside, she paused. "Now take your knife—strike!"

The command was like a death-knell.

"Oh, no—no!" she begged.

"Yes!" And the added whisper: "She killed your mother! Be revenged—strike!"

Summoning the last atom of her waning will, Joan struggled to resist that terrible command.

"Strike!" hissed the voice.

With a sob of despair, she lifted the knife, brought it down—when suddenly a cry rang out from the door.

*The mystery surrounding the strange disappearance of Joan Wingate is no nearer being solved but the circumstances are becoming more involved and poor Wayne Kimball continues his search for the girl he loves. What solution can there possibly be to this baffling case? Has the murder of either taxi-driver anything to do with Joan's disappearance? What and where is this elusive "house of the fog?" All of these questions will be answered as you continue reading this serial. The next exciting instalment will be in the March issue of GHOST STORIES, on sale on all news stands February 20th.*



By  
W. HAROLD  
WILSON

## Clue of the Blue Bead

THE two were seated in a stuffy private office at police headquarters. Harriet Oden repeatedly wiped the tears that insisted upon clouding her soft brown eyes while occasional shudders passed over her slender body. Her fair complexion seemed pallid in contrast with her curly black hair and dark brows and lashes.

Neither had spoken for several minutes. Detective Michael Kelly, a middle-aged man of medium height and stocky build, was tapping on the desk with a pencil. His gray head drooped forward, his heavy brows knitted in a frown of deep concern.

"Now, let's sec, Miss," he began to review the facts. "We ain't got much here to work on. Your sister was found dead this morning in bed, by her husband. The doctor says that death was from natural causes."

"But that is impossible. She was not ill," Harriet insisted. "Why, last evening she was in the best of spirits and feeling fine."

"That may be, Miss, but there ain't a mark on the body," the detective drawled. And after a brief pause: "Of course, circumstances point to him and his secretary pretty strong. Did your sister

*Unconsciously Harriet called out to her, "Marguerite! What's the matter? What is wrong?"*



*Everybody was baffled by the death of young Marguerite until this tiny ball rolled on the floor—*

know what relations there was between them?"

"No," she answered. "I didn't know myself until a short time ago and I learned it then by accident. I happened to return to the house one afternoon, after Marguerite and I had started for a bridge party, and I overheard Floyd and Marie quarreling. She was insisting that he leave with her."

"You didn't tell your sister about that?" the detective queried.

"No—I couldn't."

"Have you notified your people?" he then asked.

"I—you see—Marguerite was the only one of my family left—she was like a mother to me," Harriet sobbed.

THE detective sat for several minutes, apparently turning things over in his mind, then proceeded in a slow drawing voice that was tempered with sympathy and yet distinctly apprehensive: "Of course, she might have been poisoned or something like that; and I've ordered that an autopsy be performed, but it couldn't be done to-day because Mr. Langdon's been hanging too close around and we don't want him to know just yet, that he's



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**Slowly she opened her eyes and in the darkness saw the faint figure of a man. He was standing at the head of her bed. . . .**

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under suspicion. They'll get to that to-night. You come in to-morrow and in the meantime I'll keep him shadowed."

"All right, but I shall never rest until I am sure that my sister was not murdered by Floyd Langdon." Her voice emphasized an unmistakable tone of determination.

Kelly frowned. "Better be careful, Miss," he warned. "If he's guilty and gets suspicious of you—there's no telling what harm he might do you."

AS she stepped into her bright colored roadster and headed toward the beach road, she thought of that happy home back in Virginia that would be no more. Having lived with her sister and brother-in-law since her mother's death several years before, she was naturally included when the Langdons decided to come to Miami Beach for a vacation. She couldn't understand then why it was that Floyd had insisted upon bringing Marie Chadwick, his private secretary, along. He wasn't engaged in any definite business. He was one of those extremely fortunate young men who had inherited a comfortable income, and who held an honorary office in one, or possibly two, corporations in which he owned stock. But he needed a private secretary to handle his personal mail and to look after the details incident to his holdings, he would explain—and, of course, Marguerite believed him. But now Harriet understood . . . it was all clear to her.

Presently, from far down the highway, the dreary house appeared—dreary to her. They had taken it on their arrival a month ago. It stood alone, well back from the road, and overlooked the mighty Atlantic.

Walking slowly to the front of the house, she listened closely for some sound from within, but all was silent, though Floyd's car was in the garage. She stepped up to the veranda and was about to enter when she caught sight of Floyd standing about midway of the hall, in the doorway leading to the living room.

Floyd Langdon was of medium height,

slender of body, and wore his thin dark hair combed straight back with a slight break in the center. His sharp features were accentuated by narrow piercing eyes. As usual, he was faultlessly attired, presenting a sleek, well-groomed appearance.

She watched him for a moment. He was examining something that he held in his hand, in which he seemed deeply interested; so much so that he did not notice her. Harriet could not see what it was that so engrossed his attention. She moved toward him, but as she did so he looked up—startled, and quickly thrust his hand into his pocket. She saw a small object drop to the rug. She thought he showed signs of extreme nervousness—apprehension even.

"Hello, Harriet. I didn't hear you come in," he mumbled as he turned toward her and started as if to leave the house. He did not seem to be in a very conversational mood.

Appearing not to have noticed his actions, she quickly asked, "When are they going to bring the body home?"

This seemed to irritate him. "I don't know. I've been to the funeral parlors at least half a dozen times to-day, trying to hurry them up, but I don't get much satisfaction out of them. All they say is that they'll bring her out as soon as they can. I don't understand such business," he nervously answered.

"Possibly they do not know that we are taking the body back to Virginia," she ventured.

"YES they do. I told them. I'm going down there after dinner this evening and find out what's wrong," he snapped.

Kelly's plans for the autopsy immediately came to her mind, but to disagree with Floyd would be unwise; so she made no answer, though her eyes followed him as he strode abruptly from the house, crossed the road and disappeared beyond the slope to the hard surface at the water's edge. Then she turned to where he had stood when she first came in.

She intended searching for the object

he had dropped, in which he had shown such keen interest. "Possibly Marie is around somewhere and will see me," she thought, and decided to make sure. She must hurry, however, or Floyd might return. Maybe Marie was up-stairs in her room. She would see.

Marie's room was at the head of the stairs. Harriet occupied the room down the short hall and on the same side of the house as Marie's. In fact, the two rooms were joined by a connecting bath. Across the hall was one large room which had been Floyd's and Marguerite's. The door was directly opposite from Harriet's.

As she reached the top of the stairs, Marie called to her. "Oh, Harriet, is that you?" she whined in her fine shrill voice.

"Yes," Harriet answered, glancing through the open doorway as she turned into the hall. She despised the sight of Marie, who was one of those plump little blondes, with bewitching blue eyes and frivolous red lips.

"Oh, Harriet, isn't this simply terrible?" she sputtered. And in the next breath rattled on: "Why, where have you been all day, Harriet? I haven't seen you since all the excitement this morning. Just think of Mr. Langdon waking up and finding Marguerite beside him—dead! Oh, horrors—and the undertakers carrying her away in that long narrow basket. Poor Mr. Langdon. I feel so sorry for him, don't you? He has been so upset all day. I am really worried about him."

Harriet mumbled some answer to her as she went to her room. She really didn't know herself what she said, but called out as she started back down the stairs, "I'm going down to the casino to get some aspirin. I've a terrific headache."

**A**T the foot of the stairs she looked about her. Floyd had not yet returned, so she stepped quickly and quietly to the rug. Leaning over, she searched the entire surface around the living-room doorway. All she could find was what seemed to be a small blue bead, no larger than the end of her forefinger. She could see nothing to that—possibly she was mistaken; possibly it was all her imagination, she thought. But Floyd had been so keenly interested . . . she dropped the bead in

her purse and hurriedly left the house. For a moment she thought she saw her dead sister standing on the stairs, her hands holding her head.

She sped up the highway to warn Kelly of Floyd's intended visit to the morgue, and to return before he should, if possible. She knew only too well that the detective was right. It would never do for Floyd to become suspicious of her.

**I**N the telephone booth at the casino, she called headquarters. Kelly was not there but they gave her a telephone number by which she could reach him, possibly his home. She called and Kelly himself answered the 'phone.

"Mr. Kelly, this is Miss Oden speaking. I've called to tell you that Mr. Langdon intends to go to the mortician's again to-night. I thought you would want to know," she informed him.

"Glad you called, Miss. Thanks. I'll be looking out for him. You're being careful for yourself, aren't you? Remember what I told you," the detective's voice came over the 'phone. He seemed a bit apprehensive.

"Yes," she answered.

When she again arrived at the house, darkness had fallen. She found that Floyd had already returned. He seemed to be searching the hallway floor, particularly around the living-room door.

"Lost something, Floyd?" she asked.

"No," he dryly answered, as he cast a sharp cutting glance in her direction.

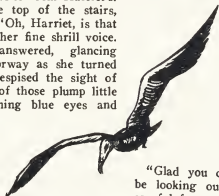
She noticed that glance, and remembering the bead in her purse, asked no further questions, but immediately passed on into the kitchen where Agnes, a fat Bahamian Negress, was preparing the evening meal.

"Lawd, honey, but yo' looks so pale and tired," Agnes said, as Harriet entered.

"I am tired, Agnes. Have you some hot coffee?"

"Yes'um. Yo' jes sit right down dere and ole Agnes give yo' a hot cup of coffee and some vittles. Poor li'l chile! Ah knows jes how yo' feels."

She wasn't hungry, however. Floyd and Marie both called her to dinner later but she declined, saying that she felt ill.



Harriet had tried for hours to sleep. Floyd had come in quite late, pushing his door to in a rather irritated manner. Finally, leaving her bed, she sat by the open window. From her room she had a clear view of the vast Atlantic, and a round full moon cut a golden path over the top of the waters. It was as quiet as the tombs, save for the slight rustling of the palms and the distant lapping of a peaceful sea.

**P**RESENTLY she experienced a strange feeling. She could not account for it, but it seemed as though it were a premonition that something was about to happen. She was not afraid. On the contrary, she was anxious—*anxious* to know what it was. She waited, but the night wore on. Finally she returned to her bed; still she was restless. She felt a burning desire to again look from the window. As she started to get up, she gasped. There, sitting in the same chair that she had left a few minutes before, she saw her sister, Marguerite!

Harriet almost called out to her. She seemed as if in the flesh. Her head was clasped in her hands and she was swaying to and fro as if suffering with a severe headache. Now she was rubbing her head—*stroking her hair*; now holding her head and swaying again. Harriet wanted to fold her in her arms, to fondle and caress her. She felt that she must go to her. As she moved—it disappeared—it was gone!

"What can this mean?" she thought.

Then suddenly, three piercing screams—screams of horror, broke the hush of the night. She leaped to the floor, and from the adjoining room, Marie yelled: "Floyd! Floyd!"

"Marie! What's the matter?" Floyd called as he jerked open his door.

"Those screams. They seem to have come from the room where Agnes sleeps beside the garage," Marie clamored.

Then Harriet heard Floyd tramping down the stairs and through the hall. Later, there was loud knocking at the front door, and in a moment she heard him talking to some one. After a time, he returned and she heard him tell Marie: "Agnes must have been dreaming. She said some one was around her room. It must have been some animal. I didn't see anything." Then he called, "Harriet, did you hear

all the commotion just a few moments ago?"

"Yes, I did," she answered. "Who was at the door?"

"Some man—said he was a plain-clothes man; that he was passing along the road and heard some one scream. He wanted to know what the trouble was," he replied as he re-entered his room and closed the door.

The next morning old Agnes came up to her room.

"Missie Harriet, is yo' seed anything las' night?" she asked.

"Why—did you?" Harriet interposed.

"Yes'um. Ah seed Missie Marguerite. She was a-walkin' aroun' and a-holdin' her head. It mos' scaid me to death when Ah fust woke up."

"Did you tell Mr. Langdon about it when he went down there?" Harriet asked.

"No'm, cause Ah's more scaid of dat man den Ah am of de ghoses—mos'."

Harriet did not tell her that she, herself, had seen a vision of Marguerite.

It was afternoon before she went to see Kelly. She was anxious to learn what the autopsy had revealed. And yet she had a feeling of dread. She found the detective again at his desk.

"Come in, Miss. Sit down," he greeted her.

Taking a chair close to the desk, she immediately inquired about the autopsy.

"We made the autopsy but found nothing, Miss," he began to explain. "No poison or no gas."

This was an unexpected surprise to Harriet, and she sat as if stupefied for several minutes before commenting. Then, as if grasping at a last straw: "But—what a—could he have strangled her—or maybe suffocated her?"

**T**HE detective shook his head thoughtfully. "Nope, either would have left signs, Miss." Then presently he asked, "What have you found out—anything?"

Remembering the little blue bead, she reached in her purse and handed it to him, explaining how she found it and how Floyd had acted. Kelly examined it at great length, his heavy brows arched, then knitted in a thoughtful frown. "Can't see anything to this right now, Miss, but leave it with me for the time being." He carefully placed it in the drawer of his desk.

"Floyd has seemed quite upset because they are holding the body so long," she told him.

"Yeah? Well, he'll have to get upset some more because the body won't hardly be ready before to-morrow morning. He delayed us last night and I want to look it over again to-day. I'm not satisfied yet—sometimes clues show up later," he mused.

AS she was about to leave, Harriet turned to Kelly and asked: "Do you believe in premonitions or a vision from the Beyond?"

"Yes, Miss, I do," he meditatively replied, eyeing her gravely.

"So do I . . . and I still believe that my sister was murdered."

At the front entrance she caught sight of Floyd standing on the corner, and darted quickly back to avoid him. All the way home she wondered if he had seen her. Surely he must have seen her car parked in front.

That night, shortly after retiring, she again felt that strange, uncanny feeling

out like that. I hope no one heard me. But what can all this mean? I don't understand it. She must want to tell me something. What can it be?" she thought.

How long she had slept she did not know. But suddenly she awakened—startled. She was conscious of some one's presence in her room—near her. Slowly she opened her eyes, and in the darkness saw the faint figure of a man. He was standing at the head of her bed. Harriet watched him, fearful that he might hear the thumping of her heart within her breast. Presently, he lifted his hand above her head—it seemed as if he were about to grip her mouth and face. She gave a terrified scream! He darted back and through the bathroom door. In a moment a light shone from Marie's room.

"Harriet! What's the trouble—dreaming?"

"No. There was some one in my room," she excitedly exclaimed, sliding out of bed and turning on her own light.

"Some one in your room?" she whined.

"Yes, he ran through the bathroom. Did you see him?" she asked as Marie came

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**Harriet turned ghastly white, then fainted. Even the seasoned detective shuddered as the doctor exclaimed: "This is the most dastardly crime I have ever known of!"**

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creep over her that she had experienced the night before. It grew stronger and she became extremely restless; so pushing the light covering aside, she sat on the edge of the bed, clad in her thin silk gown. Then looked toward the window—a shudder passed over her. Marguerite seemed to be there again. As before, she was holding her head. It was plainer this time. Harriet could see her face clearly; it seemed streaked as if with blood. Unconsciously she called out to her, "Marguerite! What's the matter? What is wrong?" And as if in answer, the hand moved—it moved to the head. Harriet leaned forward, breathless. It stroked the hair—then extended toward her as if beckoning her to come. Then back to the head and stroked the hair again and again; finally resting on top of the head, seeming to press as if to alleviate pain. Harriet started toward the window—the vision disappeared.

"How foolish, how silly of me to call

in. The blonde secretary was trembling.

"No, I didn't see anyone, Harriet," was the reply.

Then Floyd called from across the hall, "What's all the noise? What's ailing you, anyway, Harriet?"

"THERE was some one in my room, I tell you," she insisted as she slipped on her negligée and opened her door to let him in.

"Oh, you were just dreaming—go on back to bed," he snapped.

Soon the house was quiet again. But Harriet did not close her eyes until dawn brought its all-pervading sense of protection and security.

The sun was well up before she arose; looking at her watch, it was a quarter to ten o'clock.

While she was dressing, cold shivers ran up and down her spine as she reflected on the night that had just passed. She was glad that she would soon be

leaving this house; though it would be in her memory—always, with its sorrow and its horrors. Just then she heard a car come to a stop, and looking from the window, she saw the hearse. Floyd drove up behind it. She stepped back from the window . . . she could not bear to watch them bring the casket in.

**E**NTERING the hall, she found Floyd's door open. She had not been in that room since the morning of Marguerite's death. Now, she tiptoed in as if she might awaken someone who was but asleep. Marguerite's trinkets and toilet articles were still on her dressing table, just as she had left them. They did not seem to have been disturbed. Harriet touched them tenderly and fondled them all.

"I hadn't noticed that Marguerite's brush was so scarred. I wonder how she did that," she thought as she took the hair brush in her hand.

Then she heard light walking down-



*Startled, Floyd quickly thrust his hand in his pocket. Harriet saw a small object drop to the rug*

stairs; the soft rolling of wheels on the rugs—they were bringing the casket in. She rushed back into her room and closed the door so that she could not hear.

Later, slowly descending the stairs, she found that the hearse had gone. All was quiet. It had taken her quite some time to muster sufficient courage and control to come down. Hesitatingly, she stepped to the living-room door and looked within. The soft gray casket rested at the front end of the room near the double windows; the easel was banked with flowers. It was all that she could do to walk the short distance . . . and as she looked down, she burst into tears and frantically sobbed.

The small body, so lately full of life and health, was turned slightly on its side and nestled among pillows and folds of shell-pink satin and tulle, which blended softly with the luxuriant hair curling about the temples. The cheeks were faintly rouged and the lips slightly colored. She seemed as if but asleep—then, as if she were ready to speak—as if she were trying to speak. Harriet found herself again thinking of the vision, and what it could mean.

"Could it have been a message? It must mean something. I wonder . . ." she pondered.

She looked long at the head, then suddenly decided . . . glancing around the room—she was alone. Leaning over, her hand extended and touched the hair. She stroked it softly. Then, as the vision—she pressed the top of the head. Abruptly she jerked her hand away and stepped quickly back from the casket . . . What was it that had pricked her hand? She looked down. There was a spot of blood on her finger—she brushed it off—it came back. It was her own blood. She whirled around. Panic seized her and she screamed—terrified screams of horror. Then all went black before her.

When she regained consciousness, she heard Floyd saying, with a soft affected tenderness, "Poor little girl. She is overcome with grief; that is all that's wrong with her."

She was lying on the settee. Leaning over her and holding her wrist, was an elderly man. Beside him stood Michael Kelly.

"This is Dr. Bradley, Miss. I heard you scream and rushed in. You had fainted, so we summoned the doctor," he told her.

"Just lie quiet, young lady," the doctor counselled as she tried to rise.

"Please . . . some water," she sobbed.

"Bring her a glass of cold water," the doctor instructed, turning to Floyd.

As Floyd reluctantly left the room, she shot quick glances around—Marie was standing in the doorway. Harriet motioned to Kelly and he leaned close to her.

"Examine the head . . ." she gasped, pointing to the casket.

The detective's expression did not alter. The two men exchanged whispered words, but neither moved. She held up her hand—both looked at the spot of blood on the finger.

**T**HEY quickly stepped to the casket.

The doctor was examining the head. He stroked the hair. Then sharply withdrew his hand. Harriet watched them as they exchanged puzzled glances. He now parted the hair and appeared to be inspecting the scalp. Suddenly he reached for his case and secured rubber gloves and forceps. . . .

Harriet turned ghastly white, then fainted. Even the seasoned detective shuddered, as the doctor exclaimed: "This is the most dastardly crime I have ever known of!"

Kelly wheeled around and dashed from the room. The doctor devoted himself to restoring Harriet. Soon, the detective returned with a satisfied expression on his face.

"We got them, both of them," he said.

"My men had the house surrounded. I took this off of Langdon. I guess it was meant for you last night, Miss Harriet." At this he drew forth a long sharp instrument resembling a hatpin, only much stronger and apparently made of highly tempered steel. It had a round blue head.

"This is a duplicate of the one used on your sister. See," the detective said, raising his arm and gripping the pin-shaped instrument in demonstration. "With a forceful blow he drove this into the skull, then cutting the head of it off, he left only the end protruding."

"Oh, that brush on Marguerite's dressing table," Harriet said quickly to Kelly who soon reappeared with the hair-brush.

"This is what he tapped it in with," he said.

"Oh, did she suffer much?" Harriet moaned. "She was killed instantly, wasn't she, Doctor?"

"No, not necessarily," he answered. "She may have been alive several hours, but I doubt if she suffered or even tried to make an outcry. The shock of the blow must have stunned her; then the piercing of the vital centers of the brain would cause temporary paralysis. However, the puncturing and laceration of the brain tissues caused a profuse flow of blood within the head—hemorrhage of the brain. The pressure of this hemorrhage is what really caused death.

"How did you find out?" Kelly asked her.

"She told me," Harriet sobbed.

The detective and the doctor exchanged mystified glances, but Harriet knew her sister had returned through the portals of death to reveal the awful crime committed against her.

## PLAGIARISM Is Literary or Artistic THEFT

So widespread has this evil become that the publishers of GHOST STORIES Magazine take this means of announcing that they will prosecute to the limit of the law any person or persons found guilty of this offense.

Stories submitted to this magazine come through the *United States Mail*. Before acceptance the author sends *through the mail* an affidavit sworn to attesting to the fact that the story is an *original literary composition*. The check in payment for an accepted story also transmitted *through the mail*, when endorsed by the author, contains a similar warranty as to *authorship and originality*.

Despite these safeguards there are some people bold enough to deliberately copy stories from other publications and submit them as their own.

Those who have been or will be guilty of such practice *will be prosecuted to the hilt*. Any co-operation from our readers is invited.

The publishers of GHOST STORIES Magazine will not permit you to be cheated.

# The Clock with the Living Face

By

HORACE LEAF, F.R.G.S.



*A young woman attired in a voluminous silver-gray dress drew out a large butcher's knife*

IT is a firm belief of many well-informed people that inanimate objects often retain a strange influence from human beings who have touched them.

The peculiarities of this influence are, like most occult things, very perplexing and the future as well as the past seems to be accessible by it. Two years ago, I took part in a very interesting experiment conducted by the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in which an individual endowed with the faculty by means of which these impressions can be "read," made extraordinary statements which were correct in every detail.

Mrs. Agatha Christie, the popular English novelist, mysteriously disappeared under circumstances which pointed to death either by accident or suicide. The whole of England was aroused by this incident and the general public and the police combed every likely place in search of her without result. After about a week, opinion grew that the lady was dead, and interest diminished.

At this stage I received a pressing invi-

tation from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to meet him at his London house to assist in an interesting experiment with a well-known medium endowed with a curious sense known as "psychometrical." The seance was held in Sir Arthur's dining-room, he sitting at one end of the long dining table, the medium and I at the other. Doyle then handed the psychometrist a pair of lady's gauntlet gloves with the remark, "I wonder what you get with these."

WHAT he "got" fairly staggered us. After holding them for not more than ten seconds he said, "These gloves belong to a woman named Agatha, she is missing but not dead, and is at present at a watering place which, curiously, is not at the sea-side. Exactly what sort of watering place it is I cannot say, although I know it is inland. You will hear of the discovery of this lady next Wednesday."

Agatha Christie was found alive and well



*I noticed that my strange  
companions had risen to  
their feet*



*A true story which  
asks you the  
strange question:  
Can inanimate ob-  
jects "remember"  
their human owners  
for centuries?*

at Harrogate Spa, a notable health resort where people go to drink its medical waters, almost at the hour of midnight the following Tuesday, news reaching Sir Arthur early Wednesday morning!

It is obvious that in some unaccountable manner the personality of Mrs. Christie was mixed up with her gloves, and that the story they told the psychometrist continued from the past into the future.

I have mentioned this well-attested case as an introduction to an extraordinary experience I had in connection with ghost laying some years ago, wherein, among other mysterious and eerie things, a terrible tragedy was impressed in some occult way upon an ancient clock which retained the impression for more than two hundred years, tormenting and distracting more than one decent person who came in contact with it.

My association with this drama came about through an unexpected visitor in the

form of a handsome young man, a member of one of the oldest and best English families. Although only twenty-two years old this gentleman, an officer in a guards' regiment, was squire, through inheritance, of a large estate in the southwest of England. He

was obviously very nervous and distressed, his face flushed and his hands trembling, and he stated his business as soon as we had shaken hands.

"I understand you believe in ghosts?" he said.

"I do."

"And you can 'lay' them?"

"I have that reputation."

"Well, I want you to lay one for me."

**I** INVITED him to tell me something about the cause of his request, and he unfolded an amazing story:

"My name is Philip — I am Squire of Pl— Hall, Somerset. You have probably heard of it—it is the finest specimen of Tudor architecture in existence. I came into possession of it at the death of my uncle recently and thought I had got a treasure but find I have inherited little more than a curse. It frightens me."

He caught me looking at his trembling hands.

"Oh, that's not due to fear but to drink. The place nearly drives me frantic and I

have been drinking to forget it. If something isn't done soon I shall have to leave the Hall; no mortal could live in it and remain sane."

"Your uncle seems to have lived in it."

"Yes; but he took his own life. It is always like that. My own father after awhile refused to live there and he died a horrible death."

"Do you attribute that to the place also?"

"Yes; I know now that the place would kill anyone."

"How can it do that?"

"Why, man, it's full of ghosts, beastly vindictive shades that gloat over the misfortune they bring."

**I** BEGAN to think my visitor was suffering from delirium tremens, he spoke so vehemently and trembled so violently, while perspiration literally dropped from his brow.

"Here," thought I, "is a case for a doctor, not a ghost layer."

He must have guessed my thoughts for he immediately rose and, in tones more suited for soldiers than for a ghost layer, said, "Come; you shall see for yourself," and walked into the passage.

My curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and having nothing special to do I took my hat from the hat-rack and ushered my visitor into the street where his car was waiting.

The drive to Pl— Hall occupied several hours and I was not sorry when at last the car drew up before one of the most beautiful residences I had ever seen. It was a perfect picture set in a lovely natural frame and testified to the good taste of my companion's ancestors. The huge house was situated on an eminence surrounded by low-lying hills. The grounds were charming, and the house girted by magnificent terraces. Everything looked the picture of artistic peace.

The butler ushered us through the main doorway with silent deference, and after dinner we commenced a tour of the building. It had been agreed that I should stay over-night, sleeping in the room where most of the trouble seemed to center. Pl— Hall is noted among other features for its remarkable chimneys, which, in their turn, seemed to be responsible for no small part of the dreadfully eerie things which happened there. They were related to what must be one of the worst instances of human callousness on record.

The original builder of the Hall was a notable judge during the reign of Henry the Eighth, and had occasion to sentence an Italian to death for sheep stealing. Immediately after passing sentence he fell to talking with some fellow jurists, one of whom asked him how the building of the Hall was progressing. He explained that all was finished with the exception of the chimneys.

"I can't find a capable chimney-builder," he complained.

One of his friends explained that he had just sentenced the best chimney-maker in that part of the country to death. The judge therefore reprieved the Italian, set him to work making chimneys for the Hall, and as soon as they were finished hanged the unfortunate man on the first one he had completed.

We commenced the tour at the dining-room, and in course of time reached the old banquet hall, the roof of which rose to the top of the building, the walls beautifully panelled, on one of them hanging a priceless piece of tapestry, while all around the immense room stood armored figures, giving in the evening light the feeling that one was living not in the Nineteenth Century, but in the early days of the Reformation. Nothing unusual, I learned, had ever happened in this room.

Why the ghosts should have shown a preference for living up-stairs no one could say, unless it be that in that part most of the tragedies of a house packed with tragedies had occurred. We climbed an ancient staircase made of solid oak, the stairs being so thick that most of them had been worn in the center to a depth of at least two inches. At the top of these we reached the first haunted chamber.

It was an octagonally designed room high up in the main tower, and contained no furniture other than an old, very rickety table.

"**F**EW people ever enter this room," explained the young squire. "No servant will ever do so voluntarily. It is blackened with a dreadful crime, one of my ancestors having slain his only son here through a dispute over a card game. Look, these stains are said to have been caused by the blood of the poor young fellow."

I stooped down and saw by the faint light of the candle three large dark stains.

"Is there any reason for supposing the

Removing the top of the old clock, Phil invited me to look inside.

"What do you see on the rear panel?" he asked.

"An open hand," I said

ghost of the murdered man haunts the house?" I asked.

"No, but his father does. I have myself heard most distinct knocking on the walls when no one but myself was anywhere near. My uncle and I found what must have been the remains of the victim, for tradition says the young man disappeared leaving no trace behind.

"This is where we found the bones." As he spoke my host pressed against one of the worm-eaten oak panels, which slowly swung back revealing a dark cavity. Into this we both looked and saw just beyond the edge a hole about three feet deep, with marks of what I supposed to have been the lime in which the dead man had been buried. But did I see something more—a phosphorescent outline?

"After interring the bones all ghostly disturbances in this part of the house have ceased, I hope for ever," continued the squire. "I expect the spirit of the father was restless until his son was decently buried."

It interested me to notice the perfectly natural way this young officer took his ancestral ghosts for granted.

The chief disturbances had taken place in two bedrooms, one of which adjoined the squire's own. Strangely, he had never been disturbed in his bedroom, although it was not more than two yards from the principal haunted chamber. This was a big bedroom, handsomely furnished in an old style with an immense canopied bed from which picturesque but old curtains hung dismally.

**I** ELECTED to sleep in this room if the bed was sufficiently aired. No sooner had I expressed my desire than my host rang for a maid and ordered the bed to be changed and the old curtains removed. Thinking, however, that there might be some psychic value in retaining these, I asked him not to take them down. He agreed, giving orders that they should be carefully shaken and dusted before I retired.

It was now that I discovered a second young man, who turned out to be of great use to me in my investigations. He revealed his presence by calling to us as we were leaving the haunted chamber. The squire took me into the room from whence came the voice and introduced me to a pale-faced handsome young man of about twenty years old, reclining on what appeared to be an oriental couch.

**"THIS** is Mr. Horace Leaf, the well-known psychical researcher, Bertie," said my host.

The young man extended a hand as small and delicate as a girl's. "So glad you've come," he said pleasantly. "The beastly ghosts frighten one so."

"Have you seen them?" I asked.

"By Jove, I should think I have, and heard and felt them, too! I've told Phil that if they don't stop fooling about I shall have to leave Pl—Hall; haven't I, Phil?" He looked up at the squire questioningly, and that young man nodded assent.

On the whole Bertie impressed me unfavorably. He was obviously effeminate and probably hysterical, a type very unreliable where supernatural phenomena are concerned. I have more than once seen such a person make a whole household crazy with fear by persuading all and sundry that their illusions were realities. I therefore determined to question him closely.

"You have really heard and felt the ghosts as well as seen them?" I questioned.

"Indeed I have," he replied earnestly; "and so has Flip." He pointed to a fine Irish setter reclining before the fireplace, eyeing the company in a friendly way. "Do you know, Mr. Leaf, I believe that if one of these spooks could become a little more solid it would strangle anyone. Twice it assaulted me, once so effectively that I bore the impress of its fingers on my throat for quite a long time, didn't I, Phil?" The squire confirmed this extraordinary assertion.

I did not, however, take it seriously for the moment as experience had taught me that hysterical people will sometimes stage a drama by simulating the characters, and I thought it possible that Bertie might have made the marks on his throat himself. One thing in his favor was that his friend, the squire, claimed also to have experienced similar phenomena and he certainly was not hysterical, although highly strung and, at present, clearly distraught.

MY questioning came to an end when the squire interjected the remark, "I see you doubt Bertie, Mr. Leaf, but I can assure you that astounding as his statements are they are quite in keeping with my own experience. Everybody doubts us when we say these things, and we have become the laughing-stock of our friends through it; but we expect something more from you. Let us all go to my study, have a smoke and a drink, then retire and see what happens."

"Did you tell Mr. Leaf about the old clock?" asked Bertie, rising.

"No, I thought it better not to. Perhaps he may witness the phenomenon himself."

"Which clock?" I asked.

"The old one in the other bedroom."

I had noticed a quaint looking clock in that room, standing near one of the windows.

"I did not intend saying anything about it as you may see its peculiarities yourself since you are to sleep in the room. One hears such a lot about the power of suggestion."

The significance of the squire's point

of view was apparent, and I let the subject drop.

After a pleasant chat and smoke in the study, during which we all refrained from touching upon the object of my visit, we retired to our separate bedrooms. My good host first showed me what he called "the lay of the land," the whereabouts of the electric switches, exactly how to reach his room, or to get quickly to Bertie's should that young man "get scared and cry for help." The squire assured me that although Bertie was very sensitive and nervous he was nevertheless courageous.

Still rather uncertain as to all the tricks the ghosts were supposed to play, I undressed and retired to my huge bed, made comfortable by the good offices of the servants who had placed upon it every up-to-date convenience.

A thorough search of the room had revealed nothing more than a number of what I supposed to be invaluable antiques, the entire setting of the chamber being such as to make me feel that I had jumped back several centuries.

The long journey from London must have made me very tired for soon after switching out the light, the controls of which were close to the head of the bed, I fell asleep and had a most vivid dream which developed into a ghastly nightmare.

I IMAGINED I was in a room furnished in Tudor style, watching five people seated, as I thought in the bizarre manner of dreams, waiting for afternoon tea. They were dressed in all manner of strange garb, while one of them, to whom the others paid great respect, wore a huge



"This is where we found the bones," my host said, but did I see something more—a phosphorescent outline?

crown. The company was very merry, laughing and joking, throwing from one to the other a red ivory ball. Suddenly a bitterly cold wind blew through the room with a rushing noise, and as it came I looked round at the old clock that I had seen standing in the corner of my bedroom. At this moment the cold wind stopped and in place of the rushing noise I heard most horrible groans coming from inside the clock, as of a man in mortal agony.

Then I noticed that my strange companions had ceased playing ball and had risen to their feet, one of them, a tall thin man hastily leaving the room, his face flushed with anger.

As we watched the clock it turned into a man's face, a foreigner by appearance. Then the hands of the clock commenced slowly to revolve and as they did so the face in the clock became distorted with fear and large drops of blood fell from his eyes. Suddenly the hands stopped at what I thought was the hour at which they had been striving against some hidden power to reach. Immediately the hands stopped, one of the company, a most beautiful young woman attired in a voluminous silver-gray dress with a small lace ruffle round her neck, rushed to the clock and lifting up the top put her hand inside and drew out a large butcher's knife. Her face had turned ashen, and looking towards me she flung the knife to the floor exclaiming, "It is as well that you should know what happened."

The next moment I found myself fully awake standing beside my bed trembling in every limb, shocked to hear the air pierced with fearful shrieks coming from the direction of Bertie's bedroom.

Switching on the lights, I rushed to the door and out into the corridor, colliding forcibly with the squire who, like myself, had not troubled to put on a dressing gown.

"QUICK," he cried, "it's here and must be killing Bertie."

We dashed into the young man's room simultaneously and beheld what must be the most perfect expression of fear in man and animal. Bertie was cowering with his right arm raised as if to shield himself from some terrible danger, while the Irish setter pressed close to him shivering all over and sweating till it shone.

The squire rushed to his horror-stricken friend, while I instinctively glanced in the

direction Bertie's attitude signified the danger came from, and as I did so a loud rumbling noise shook the whole house and sounded as if the entire contents of the next room had been overturned.

"Look, look," cried the terrified young man. "There it is, there it is, take it away. Oh, God!" And with a dismal groan he sank unconscious into his friend's arms.

THE dog, however, seemed to recover from its fright when the lights were turned on and it saw us. Shaking itself as if to throw off fear, it sprang towards the door of a wardrobe frantically snarling and showing its teeth. It was at this door that I had been looking, but could see nothing unusual, until the squire called out, "Turn out the light."

I obeyed instantly and then saw clearly in the direction of the wardrobe the apparition of a tall, foreign looking man dressed in what I supposed to have been that of a cook centuries ago. To my amazement as the apparition became clearer, it was none other than the man whose face I had seen in the clock in my dream. It had, however, none of the fear which had made it weep blood, but a look of venomous hatred impossible to describe.

When the apparition had faded away, we let in the servants who, having heard Bertie's cries, had rushed to his apartment, and they carried the still unconscious man down to the study and began to apply restoratives; but the shock had been too great and he did not recover until two doctors had been called to attend to him. The after effects were very bad for his none too robust constitution. Although I saw no more of him after leaving PI—Hall the next day, I learned from the squire that he had developed internal hemorrhage and had been sent to Rhodesia for a cure.

As soon as Bertie had been made as snug as the unfortunate circumstances would permit, the squire and I talked matters over, and I recounted my dream to him. He was intensely excited about it, frequently interrupting me in his anxiety to say what he had divined.

"By Jove!" he cried, when I had finished my narrative. "You have solved the mystery, I do believe. That ghost can be 'laid,' after all. Come with me."

He rushed up to the room in which I had been sleeping, and removing the top

of the old clock, invited me to look inside.

"What do you see impressed on the rear panel?" he asked with an expectant look.

"An open hand."

"Precisely. Now I will tell you an interesting story. I am related to the Holt family. Early in the seventeenth century one of the family was entertaining the king at dinner with a small party. Lord Holt was immensely proud of his cook, whom he considered the best and most punctual in England, and he was always boasting about him.

"On the occasion of this party the king for fun challenged him to a bet that the cook would be late with the dinner, and Holt accepted. They all sat watching this clock; the chef was late, and Holt in a terrible passion rushed to the kitchen and stabbed the poor man to death with a big knife, which broke in his body.

"Holt was tried by his peers for murder, but being a friend of the king, was acquitted; but the king insisted that as a punishment and a sign, his family should have an open hand im-

pressed on all their goods and chattels whenever possible. It is called the 'Bloody Hand.'

"Now Bertie and I have actually seen the hands of this clock revolve without any human agency, and we had hoped that you would have been able to see the same phenomenon, but you dreamed it instead.

"What would you advise me to do to stop the haunting by this poor cook? For I am persuaded that it is he who has placed the worst curse upon the Hall."

"Remove the clock."

"That is just what I intend to do."

No time was lost in carrying out this decision. Within six hours the ancient time-piece was on its way to Shrewsbury, where it probably remains to this day.

I maintained my acquaintance with the young squire for about two years after this series of strange events, and learned

that all ghostly disturbances had ceased, and that his lovely old home had become a place to enjoy as well as to admire. Nothing further has been reported of the clock.



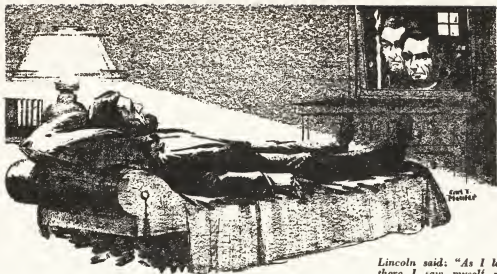
## Spirit Voices on Phonograph Records

ON more than one occasion the voices of communicating spirits have been reproduced on phonograph discs. One of the most elaborate experiments in this direction was carried out by Mr. Dennis Bradley, of London, and Lord Charles Hope, in collaboration with the Columbia Phonograph Company.

The seance took place in Lord Charles Hope's London flat; the spirit voice was transmitted over a specially connected tele-

phone cable to the phonograph company's office, some miles away, where it was recorded on a mold, from which several discs were made. The experiment was expensive, costing more than a thousand dollars.

The National Laboratory of Psychical Research, London, also possesses a unique record of a voice purporting to be that of a spirit from the planet Mars, singing a song in the Martian language. This is recorded on a dictaphone cylinder.



*Lincoln said: "As I lay there I saw myself reflected in that glass. My face had two separate and distinct images"*

# When Lincoln Saw His Own Phantom

*Presenting an historical fact story  
based on the Great Emancipator's own words*

By HERBERT HALL TAYLOR

**W**AS Abraham Lincoln psychic? There are many instances of his premonitions coming true. Once in relating a strange episode in his life, he said to John Hay, afterwards the Secretary of State:

"It was just after my election in 1860. The news had been coming in thick and fast all day and there had been 'Hurrah, Boys!' so that I was well tired out and went home to rest, throwing myself on a lounge in my chamber.

"Opposite to where I lay was a bureau with a swinging glass upon it, and in looking in that glass I saw myself reflected nearly at full length. My face, I observed, had two separate and distinct images; the tip of the nose of one being about three inches from the tip of the other. I was a little bothered—perhaps startled—and I got up and looked in the glass. The illusion vanished"

"On lying down again, I saw it a second time; plainer if possible than before. Then I noticed that one of the faces was a little paler—say five shades—than the other.

"Once more I got up and the thing melted away and in the excitement of the hour I forgot all about it; nearly, but not quite, for the thing would once in a while come back again, but I never succeeded in bringing the ghost back after that, although I once tried very industriously to show it to my wife, who was somewhat worried about it."

"What was her interpretation of the phantom, Mr. President?" asked John Hay.

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, slowly and impressively, "Mrs. Lincoln thought it was a 'sign' that I was to be elected to a second term of office, and that the paleness of one of the faces was an omen that I should not see life through the last term."

It was apparent to other friends with



whom he talked that the President was considerably perturbed at the appearance of the phantasm. John S. C. Abbott, in a further reference to the uncanny incident, quotes Lincoln as saying:

"The next day, while walking in the street, I was suddenly reminded of the circumstance; and the disagreeable sensation produced by it returned. I determined to go home and place myself in the same position and if the same effect was produced, I would make up my mind that it was the natural result of some principle of refraction or optics which I did not understand and dismiss it. I tried the experiment with a like result.

**B**UT some time ago, I tried to produce the same effect by arranging a mirror and couch in the same position. The illusion never appeared again."

That Lincoln had a streak of superstition in his nature is certain. There seems to be plenty of evidence, too, that he was extremely impressionable. His superstitions were well-known to his intimate friends, who were careful never to make light of them. He lived constantly in the serious conviction that he was, himself, the subject of a special decree, created by some unknown and mysterious power, for which he had no name.

As a concrete instance of his susceptibility to impressions, it is in evidence that upon one occasion when Mrs. Lincoln was visiting with "Tad," their little boy, in Philadelphia, the President sent her this telegram:

Executive Mansion  
Washington, June 9, 1863.

Mrs. Lincoln,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Think you better put Tad's pistol away. I had an ugly dream about him.

A. Lincoln.

Many of the superstitions accredited to Lincoln were widespread, such as a belief in the efficacy of the horse-chestnut as a preventative of rheumatism. The President always carried one in his pocket. He also had great faith in the mad-stone, or bezoar, as a cure for hydrophobia, although he would advance no reason for it and frankly admitted that it looked like superstition. Although he laughed about it, he would never sit at a dinner where there were exactly thirteen persons at table.

Was Abraham Lincoln a spiritualist?

Every disciple of that doctrine solemnly

asserts that he was, and a favorite assertion is that he issued the Emancipation Proclamation upon the advice of a medium.

With his susceptibility to superstition, it is easily conceivable that the President should become interested in the time-honored query: "If a man die; shall he live again?" That he was greatly interested seems apparent. He read assiduously what literature he could find upon the subject of spiritualism and frequently discussed the theory with others who were equally interested. It is true that with them he made no secret of the fact that he regarded the ultimate destiny of man with considerable concern.

It is equally true that Lincoln attended seances and that he was greatly interested in the question of the continuity of existence. Many mediums, famous in those days, visited at the White House and conducted private seances there at the President's invitation. Among these were Charles Colchester and the lauded Charles Foster. All of these mediums made revelations purporting to emanate from the spirit world.

Though Lincoln attended seances, it is said that he found the information given to him so contradictory and so irreconcilable that he attached little importance to it. Concerning these communications, Lincoln once said: "These advices of the spirits are as contradictory as the voices of my own cabinet, of which meetings the seances somewhat remind me."

The President's interest in the question of survival was in no way abated by his inability to receive any satisfactory evidence of it through mediums. It is related that once, when desperately ill, he asked Secretary Seward what he knew of the future life.

"Very little, Mr. President," replied Seward.

**N**OR I, either," sighed Lincoln, "but when a man is in the position that I am, it seems to be the one thing in the whole world worth knowing."

During the last half century it has been customary for some speakers at spiritualist meetings to declare: "The destinies of the nation were once controlled by spiritualism, when President Lincoln consulted a medium just before issuing the Emancipation Proclamation." (The implication being, of course, that the proclamation was issued as a result of that consultation.)

As a matter of fact, however, President Lincoln sought no advice from the spirit world as to his policy on the slavery question. What basis there is for the claim of the spiritualist emanated from a statement by Colonel S. P. Case, a millionaire railroad builder of Philadelphia.

Colonel Case said in an interview: "That the late President was a spiritualist there is not the least doubt. Why, some of the happiest experiences I have ever had in connection with the whole subject of spiritualism, covering a space of nearly thirty years, I enjoyed in company with the chief and Mrs. Lincoln."

"Do you contend that the Emancipation Proclamation was issued as a result of a communication from the world of spirits?" inquired the interviewer.

The colonel tipped back in his chair, a pleasant smile on his face. "There is not the least doubt that a spirit communication turned the scales and was the pivot upon which one of the most important events in American history revolved."

"Do you mind being a little more explicit, Colonel? What is the basis for that assertion?"

Colonel Case got his cigar going. "I'll tell you the whole story. It was in 1862, when I was attending to some of my railroad interests that were then before Congress, that I first had the honor of meeting Mr. Lincoln and our acquaintance grew into one of the most pleasant friendships of my life.

**B**EING always interested in new things, I incidentally learned through Judge Wattles of a spirit medium named Mrs. Laurie—then living in Georgetown—and with him arranged to attend her seances, as they were called. I was surprised when one evening the judge and myself were shown into the little parlor where the seance was to be held, to find several ladies and gentlemen prominent in Washington society, already there, and among the number, President and Mrs. Lincoln.

"After a little conversation, Mrs. Laurie announced that her daughter was a medium for physical manifestations and that

while she was seated at the piano, the instrument itself would be lifted from the floor upon unseen hands, and that any number of persons sitting upon it produced no perceptible difference in the result.

"Someone suggested that Judge Wattles and myself sit upon the top of the piano and see if our united weight would hold it to the floor.

"We accordingly did so, but at times the piano was raised wholly from the floor. President Lincoln joined us in our elevated position but the levitation persisted. We then sat about a table for a time while loud raps were heard in all parts of the room.

**W**HAT I have been telling you thus far is not responsive to your inquiry, but I thought it might be interesting to acquaint you with what occurred prior to the incident that has caused so much discussion.

"The manifestations at the table having ceased, Mr. Lincoln entertained us by the relation of some peculiar mediumistic experiences he had enjoyed with a medium by the name of Conkling. As the President paused, there was an instant of absolute silence.

"Suddenly, a younger daughter of Mrs. Laurie, who had been sitting in another part of the room, arose and slowly advanced to the place where we were all sitting. Her eyes were tightly closed. Stepping forward, she paused directly in front of the President and raising her right hand, dramatically, she pointed to Mr. Lincoln and addressed him pointedly upon the subject of human freedom. She closed her remarks by declaring in a most impressive manner:

"There is in the spirit world a congress of wise spirits who hold the welfare of this nation in their keeping. You, sir, have been called to your present position to serve a great and mighty purpose. There are to-day thousands who are in physical bondage, from whose neck the yoke of oppression must be lifted, that this republic may lead the world. Thou art the man!

"Issue, we implore you, a proclamation of emancipation giving freedom to the slave and from that hour victory will crown the



Union army and Heaven and humanity will be served.'

"I wish you might visualize that young girl as she stood there in the dimly-lighted room; her hair falling to her waist; her face aglow with enthusiasm. She was the very personification of inspiration. Jeanne d'Arc in her most illumed moments could not have manifested more power. We listened spellbound to the burning words and when they closed there was not a dry eye in the room.

"The young girl finally recovered consciousness and started back, abashed at having addressed the President. Mr. Lincoln was greatly overcome by what he had heard, which was in fact one of the most powerful pleas for human rights to which I have ever listened. The controlling spirit was said to have been Seneca, the great Roman philosopher.

"On taking our departure, the President turned to me and said: 'I am deeply impressed at what I have heard.'

"This was late in December, 1862. On January 1, 1863, the great Emancipation Proclamation was issued and from that

time the twenty-six battles that followed were all successful to the Union side. The exact prediction of the young girl had been fulfilled.

"In subsequent conversations which I had with the President, he spoke of numberless seances he had held with Charles Foster, Mrs. Maynard, Mr. Conkling and others, and he frequently referred to that eventful night in '62, and always in the most serious tone."

Accepting the story told by Colonel Case as absolutely true, it is most interesting but hardly justifies the claim set forth by many spiritualists. As an example of occult phenomena, the personal experience of President Lincoln in the vision which he saw of himself in the mirror, is far more convincing to me. Phantasms of the living are not rare and are usually warnings of disaster. Mr. Lincoln was not likely to have suffered from a delusion. The views which he has expressed on spiritualism are self-explanatory. The President was at most an open-minded inquirer—an investigator, willing to be convinced of psychic phenomena.

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# The Wolf in the Dark

As told to  
J. PAUL SUTER

By WILLIAM HOLLISTER

*Outside the comfortable,  
lighted rooms of our lives  
there may lurk even such  
a Horror as this!*

**J**EFFREY ARNOLD beckoned me to the window.  
"See it?" he demanded. "In that dark spot by the gate?" He pointed to the place, and with his other hand grasped my shoulder.

I shook my head. The ruinous brick wall around the quaint, circular building in which we lodged—known, appropriately, as the Ivy Tower—rose higher just to the right of the gate than anywhere else in its length. As a result, the moon-cast shadow



*Arnold cried  
out from above  
me. The gray  
thing darted  
into the shadow*

of the wall on our lawn was broader there. That was the "dark spot." The single electric light in the middle of the campus made little difference to it, one way or another. I had been looking into the shadow where he pointed, but though I leaned far out over the wide stone window sill I saw nothing.

"Just what do you expect me to see?" I countered.

He grunted, impatiently.

"I can't answer that, little Hollister. That would be suggesting it to you. Look again, while my hand is in contact with you."

**I TRIED.** No doubt my imagination got into play. Twice I half thought that I perceived something—or some one—staring back at me, out of the luminous shadows of the summer night. Each time, I shifted my gaze across the campus to the gray college buildings—old Burton slumbering in the moonlight—and when I looked down again there was nothing but the yellow glow on the shimmering grass blades, as the night wind swayed them. I said as much to Arnold. With another grunt, he left the window and flung himself into the arm-chair by the table where he did his studying.

"Do you know, Hollister, it's a funny thing—" He stretched his long legs until his feet came into view beneath the side of the table where I sat. "—I haven't talked about this to a soul since Tantenberg went. That was nearly five years ago—in my prep school days. Why should I pick you out? You've never been keen on psychic stuff, have you?"

"Don't know the first thing about it," I told him.

"Never, by any chance, seen a ghost?" He asked the question rather wistfully, but I grinned at him.

"Wouldn't believe it was there if I did see it."

He grinned back. His face was long and lean and grave, with a chin deep out of all proportion, but he had a boyish grin. It was that which had attracted me three months before, when I had been assigned—a lowly fresher—to the quarters next below his in the Ivy Tower.

"Since I've gone this far, I might as well tell you the rest." His face was grave again. "When a fellow has plugged along for several years, seeing and hearing things that others can't, he reaches

the point where he's got to confide in some one or burst. That's my fix. I haven't a soul to talk to—not about this." He swept one arm in a semi-circle to indicate the rows of books in his library. Even I could see at a glance that they were not ordinary books. "I've been going it alone ever since Tantenberg's time."

"Who was he?" I put in.

"My old psychology 'prof' at Badlington. Odd that he should have taught in a place like that! There's not a narrower prep school in America. Of course, when they found him out—" He broke off, with a chuckle. "They said he had dealings with the devil. Perhaps he had. It was a frightful mess, anyway. Poor old Tantenberg got the sack. I came near getting it, myself, but the Board decided that I was his victim and really not to blame, so all they did was to confine me to my room for a month. I've often felt that if I had had my liberty I could have got into touch with Tantenberg. When I went back on the old basis, he was gone for good. I never saw him again. Now, Hollister—" He leaned across the table toward me. "—you've had physics, of course?"

"Two semesters."

"Then you know about light and sound, and all the rest; the vibrations above and below the spectrum, which we can't see? And the sounds of too great frequency—or too little—for us to hear? Did it ever occur to you that creatures, or beings—call them anything you like—might live in those frequencies?"

"You mean real creatures—tangible things?"

"**O**H, they're real enough, I assure you," he said, dryly. "As to their being tangible—that means you'd have to be able to touch them. I'm not so sure about that."

"But can you see them?"

"I *have* seen them. I rather thought one was beginning to manifest to-night when we were looking out of the window. It seemed like a good opportunity to initiate you. But you didn't initiate." He smiled. "Ever read your 'Aesop's Fables' when you were a little chap, Hollister?"

"I still read them."

"My instinct about you must have been right. There's something in common about two fellows who like Aesop. No doubt you remember the one about the woman who had a crying baby in her arms, and

she threatened to throw him to the wolf outside the window if he didn't behave?"

My thoughts went back to an old house of wide and draughty hallways, and a little boy reading Aesop's Fables beside a dark window. I was the little boy. Arnold looked at me keenly, and nodded as if he had read my mind.

"Of course, she never did throw the baby out," he went on. "But to me the impressive thing about that story was the wolf waiting out there in the dark. Suppose the baby had fallen out by accident!"

I nodded, without speaking. I had thought of that, too—in my dim, old days of childish terrors.

Arnold rose from his chair. He walked slowly to the window. I thought he was going to beckon me again. Instead he turned, with a kind of smoldering fire in his eye, and his face very somber.

"There's a lot to that fable, Hollister. I don't mean the obvious moral—the one that's tacked on in the book. I mean the thought the unknown author had in his mind. The comfortable, lighted rooms of our lives—our safe, well-regulated, blind lives. The dark window. The wolf waiting outside in the dark. My God, what a nightmare some of us are going to tumble into when we die!"

**I** FOUND myself standing, too, looking into his face. It was not so much what he said as the tone of it. For just an instant—for less than an instant, as he spoke—a curtain lifted in my brain, and I looked out. I remember thinking, in that fraction of a second, that it was a

curtain which had been down since before my birth; which, in the usual course of life, would not have lifted while I still drew breath. But it did lift. I looked out. Arnold read something in my eyes, and, hooking his arm in mine, led me to the window.

"**T**RY the dark spot again, Hollister," he urged, gently. "The moon has shifted, but it is still pretty black there. See anything?"

I could not.

"Oh, well!" He turned from the window. "I can't see it myself now. There are beings who live beyond our limitations—some of them not very far beyond—whom we can see under certain conditions. Old Tantenberg taught me how to develop my powers along that line, and I've traveled quite a bit down the road since I knew him. Some of the things I see aren't very nice

to look at. Yet they are real. All of us will have to see them—some day. Would you like to learn?"

I hesitated a few seconds, and he put a kindly hand on my shoulder.

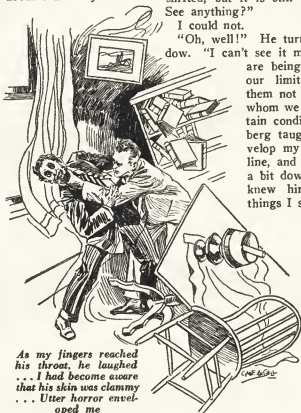
"Go down to bed, Hollister. Sleep on it. It's far too import-

ant a matter for snap judgment, I assure you. To-morrow, or some time later, we can talk about it again. I intend to turn in myself now, and it will take more than elementals to keep me awake."

"Elementals?"

"That's what they are called," he explained. "Good night."

Yet it was not a good night for me. Un-easily, I walked my bedroom directly under Arnold's apartment. Ours was an odd dwelling-place. It was the oldest building on the campus—it had been there long before the college itself—and though, various conflicting traditions sought to explain its strange, tower-like construction,



*As my fingers reached his throat, he laughed . . . I had become aware that his skin was clammy . . . Utter horror enveloped me*

no one whom I ever met could give me the truth of it. All the apartments were connected by a winding staircase. Since I had moved in, the junior in the ground floor apartment had gone home ill. Arnold and I had the building to ourselves, save for the cleaning woman who visited the rooms each day.

The floors were thin and old. I could hear Arnold moving about. He shuffled back and forth above me. Our bedrooms were not carpeted. An occasional long pause interrupted the steps. I knew, without being told, that he had gone into his study to look out of the window. At last, I myself went to my window.

THE shadow by the gate was no longer luminous. It lay black and menacing across our lawn, like an evil thing. A narrow strip of shimmering yellow, far to the left, was all that remained to tell of the moon.

I returned to my arm-chair and had lighted my going-to-bed pipe when I heard Arnold's footsteps again.

I ran to my window. What I saw was no hallucination. It was a thin, gray shape, crossing the narrow strip of moonlight—crossing it swiftly yet stealthily, like a hunted thing. Arnold cried out from above me. The gray thing had darted into the shadow. I heard its running feet across the grass. It was running for the door at the foot of our stairs. We never locked that door. In a moment, I heard the thing again. It was coming up the stairs.

I shrank into the darkness beside my window. My own door was not locked. But the running footsteps did not hesitate there. They raced upward, and I heard Arnold's door wrenched open.

It seemed to me that a few words were exchanged. But I shall never be sure of that. If anyone did speak, either Arnold or his visitor, their conversation was of the briefest. There was time for not more than half a dozen words, at the most, before another sound came down the stairs.

I had never before heard anything like that sound, yet its nature was unmistakable. It was the hoarse scream of a human being in the extreme of horror and agony.

The scream was hardly silent before Arnold's door opened again.

"Hollister! Hollister!" he called.

I was up the rickety winding stairs, two at a time. Before I had quite reached

the top, Arnold staggered to meet me. I kept him from falling headlong. He was sobbing.

"Poor old chap!" he choked. "It got him! He came to me for protection, but it got him!"

"What?" I demanded.

I could just see the foot of something lying prone and crumpled within the circle of his study lamplight.

"Come," was all he replied.

He seemed to pull himself together as rapidly as he had let go. I followed him into the study, and forced myself to look at the man who lay on the floor.

He was a small, black-bearded man, very thin and sallow. His face, half-twisted about—he had fallen forward—still wore the grin of horror which must have marked his last earthly emotion. Even as I looked, however, the features began to relax into the cold placidity of death.

"Come on, Hollister," Arnold caught me by the arm. "We'll sit on my bed. We'll have to decide what to do."

"Who is it?" I asked.

"It's Tantenberg." He pushed me down to a seat on the bed, and sat beside me. "Don't ask me how he came here. I haven't any more idea than you. All I know is that he was trying to escape. That was obvious. I was perhaps the one man in the world who could have helped him—at any rate, the one man he knew of. But he came too late. There wasn't time. It got him."

"What got him?" I demanded.

"The Thing that killed him." He thrust his grim face close to mine. "Listen, Hollister. Will you go for Dean Campbell? There'll have to be an inquiry into this—the coroner and all that. He'll call it heart disease. They always do."

"I'll put on my coat and go now."

His hand detained me.

"Old man—" I started at the unusual note of pleading in his firm voice. "Don't be long."

I promised, and went back to my room to dress.

FIFTEEN minutes later I returned, without having waited for the Dean to accompany me. I had merely given my message and left. The strange note in Arnold's voice worried me. But he was still sitting on the edge of his bed. As I plumped down beside him, my eyes turned, with a sort of fascination, toward the open door of his



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**But It utterly failed to achieve Its main purpose—the indefinite possession of a mortal body in which to work Its evil**

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study. He had changed the position of the oil lamp on the table. Now the body lay in shadow, and I was glad.

"Good, little Hollister!" He gripped my knee nervously with his long, delicate hand. "I suppose the Dean will be along when he gets into his clothes? You still don't know what all this is about, do you?"

I shook my head.

"To think that once I used to be as innocent as that! You've never read Myers or Barrett or O'Donnell—any of them? Borrow some of my books, when you have time. Haven't you, honestly, even heard of elementals?"

I met his keen, dark eyes with another negative. I felt a little ashamed. Tremendous issues of life and death had been swirling about my head on that close, summer night, and my senses were shut to them. Footsteps sounded on the still campus. My companion's friendly grip tightened.

"Here he comes. That's the fastest I've heard him walk since I started here. Elementals, little Hollister, are spirits that have never been clothed in flesh. They are continually acting on man, usually without his knowledge. Some of them are tremendously powerful and utterly evil—that was the kind that got poor old Tantenberg. Why did It get him?—*because* It was evil. Such beings kill for the sheer lust of it. Listen, Hollister—I hear the Dean. He's just starting up the stairs. Before he comes in, I want to tell you something.

"I'm all alone in the world—father and mother dead, no one to tell me what to go in for. All I have is plenty of money. I've not been able to make up my mind, before to-night, as to my career. This settles it!" He waved an arm, almost fiercely, toward the pathetic, broken figure on the study floor. "They're going to call it heart failure—mark my words! But, no matter what they call it, I know the truth. I know what killed him. God help me, I saw him die! While such dangers are possible to man, there is need for some one to devote his life to studying

and thwarting them. That will be my work! You hear me, Hollister? I call on you to remember what I said." His voice changed. "Here's the Dean."

Our Dean at Burton, William Campbell, was a gaunt, deep-eyed old Scotchman of rare comprehension. I have often thought that, if Arnold had seen fit to tell him the whole story, with all its terrific implications, the old man might have understood. He came from the Highlands, whose people see behind the veil oftener than most. His advice at this critical moment might have averted the horror which was to descend upon us that night.

**A**RNOLD'S tale was quite matter-of-fact.

Tantenberg, an old professor whom he had not seen for years, had visited him unexpectedly, and had dropped dead, without a word. That was all he knew. Perhaps the Dean at Badlington might know the address of the relatives. Neither Dean Campbell, nor the coroner who came later and pronounced the cause of death heart disease as my friend had predicted, could get more out of Arnold than that.

Arnold had answered the inevitable queries calmly enough. When the examination was finished, he looked from the Dean to the fat, phlegmatic coroner, and in his turn put a question.

"What are you going to do with him?" He nodded toward the body.

The coroner replied: "I shall rouse the undertaker on my way back, and have him come over right away. The body can lie at his place while inquiries are made."

Arnold shook his head, emphatically.

"I don't want it that way. Tantenberg was my friend. Why not leave him here until his relatives are found? And let the undertaker wait till morning."

Dean Campbell's bushy, white eyebrows lifted in surprise. He glanced at me, and at the Coroner.

"I've no objection," I told him.

The coroner shrugged his shoulders, with a slow smile.

"If you have none, young man, neither have I. It's a matter between you and

your friend and Dr. Campbell. No doubt the undertaker will be glad of his night's sleep."

"Ye are very sure ye wish this, Arnold?" The Dean's rugged, kindly face was inscrutable. "Most young men would go to lengths to avoid anything of the sort."

"He was my friend," Arnold returned, stubbornly. "Anyway, I'm different from most young men."

"I'M thinking ye are." The old man nodded, thoughtfully. "Friendship is a wonderful thing, lad. It shall never be said that I kept one friend from showing the last sacred considerations to another. Have it your way."

Before they left, the two men lifted poor Tantenberg to the couch in Arnold's study. At the door Dr. Campbell turned. The corner was already lumbering down our winding stairs.

"Now that he is gone, I can ask ye, lad. Won't ye permit me to share your vigil?"

For the space of a breath, my friend seemed to hesitate. Then he shook his head.

"Thank you, Dr. Campbell. You are very kind, sir. But Hollister and I can manage well enough. No need for you to lose your rest. I think, too, I'd rather——"

The old man nodded, understandingly.

"Yes. Yes. After all, he was *your* friend. If ye change your mind, don't fear to rouse me. Good night, lads."

Dr. Campbell had scarcely started down before Arnold turned to me. We were still standing in his study. Tantenberg, the lamp directed away from him by the coroner, lay in shadow on the sofa.

"You're willing to stay, Hollister? You're not afraid?"

"You think we should watch by him till morning?" I returned.

"I *know* we should."

"Then of course I'll stay."

"I don't like to ask it," he went on, soberly. "But you'll be safer than the Dean. He's an old man. He might have a weak heart. I'm not quite up to watching by myself. Consider me a coward, if you want to."

Before I could reply, he whirled about with a sharp, abrupt motion and stepped

quickly around the table to the side of the couch where the body lay. A glance seemed to reassure him—if reassurance of some sort was what he desired. He turned away, and looked at me with stern eyes and dilated nostrils.

"We'd better sit where we can see his face. Okay, Hollister?"

I nodded. He placed a chair near the foot of the couch, and motioned me to it. There already was one by the head. He strode to the open window, peered into the darkness, then took that chair.

"Whatever we do, we must not go to sleep. If we sleep to-night, we may not wake again. And we must be sure the lamp stays lighted. Thank goodness, there's plenty of oil!"

"Perhaps we should shut the window," I suggested.

"No." He shook his head.

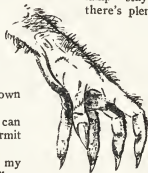
"I want both window and door open. We are safer in a current of air. A confined space gives the power too much opportunity to concentrate. Too bad they never wired this old ruin!" He grinned, suddenly. "Don't know what I'm talking about, do you, Hollister?"

Well, I'll tell you. Poor old Tantenberg, here, has been done to death by a spirit. That's the plain English of it. I've sensed something sinister around all evening.

"When I called you to the window the first time, I believe I actually saw it. Tantenberg was in the neighborhood, I'm sure—though I didn't know that then. He was trying to get away from *It*; trying to find me, so that I could help him. But he was too late. I couldn't save the poor old chap from death. Not from death, Hollister." His mouth tightened. "But, God helping me, that devil shan't get his body!"

"What good would his body be to *It*?" My brain was reeling. The whole thing was monstrous, incredible. Yet I found myself asking the question soberly, though with throat so dry that the words would hardly come.

"ASK me that afterward. You'll be stronger if you don't know just yet. We have a fight on our hands. Remember what St. Paul said?" His voice sank, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers; against the Rulers of the Darkness of this



World.' That's our situation, Hollister. All I want you to do is to sit there—sit there and be your wholesome, matter-of-fact self. That's how you can help. Sit there—and try to keep yourself sane!"

I leaned forward in my chair—toward him and toward the corpse on the sofa. A sudden horrible suspicion of his meaning came to me.

"You mean it will attack our——"

"Our minds," he finished for me, grimly. "Now you know. Try not to think of it. Think of something else—something far away from here."

I felt my teeth bite into my lips with the effort I made to take his advice and think of something not connected with that room—with the silent occupant of its sofa, its little pool of sickly yellow light on the rug, its dark window with a still, breathless, ghost of a breeze blowing in.

The best I could do was to bring back the memory of the old house with the draughty passages; of myself, puny and shivering, sitting by that black window—the window out of the past—not daring to look into the darkness beyond for fear of the expectant wolf. I tried to force my thoughts into brighter lanes. For a moment, pleasanter memories danced across the screen. But they would not remain. When I needed them—a furtive glance at Arnold's somber eyes told me how badly I needed them—they flitted rapidly past, and the wolf was still there.

I was trying to keep my eyes away from Tantenberg's placid face. But a sharply drawn, hissing intake of breath by Arnold caught me unaware. I followed his gaze to the head of the sofa. One of the dead man's locks had been lifted by a sudden gust of air. It rose for a moment and dropped back to his forehead. The next instant, there was a long-drawn, thin titter of laughter—I can give it no other name—from outside. It seemed to come from somewhere high in the air.

Arnold sprang up.

"Hear that, Hollister?"

**I** HAD no time to reply. A swirling, shrieking wind was in the room. It had entered as the last thin laughter died away. Arnold threw himself toward the lamp. I jumped with outstretched hand at the casement, but a peremptory command from him halted me in my tracks.

"Don't shut the window! On your life,

don't dare to shut the window! Beware!"

He was shielding the lamp with his body. The broad flame, bent far over and almost extinguished with the force of the first blast, recovered itself.

"Guard it, Hollister. I must get back to Tantenberg. They will try to put it out—don't let them. Here they are again!"

I did not notice his sudden lapse into the plural. It seemed accurate. A gust from a single source could hardly have attacked in as many directions as did the wind which entered at that moment. I leaned across the table, literally trying to curve myself between the lamp and the menacing window. There was no cloth on the table to use as a screen.

**T**HAT attack seemed longer. "They" almost beat me. Just as the flame blew so far over that the least additional strain would have ended it, I clapped my hand over the chimney. The yellow semicircle of flame blazed up bright and strong.

"Good old Hollister!" Arnold was standing in front of the body on the sofa. It was an attitude of defence. His blazing eyes were fixed on the open window.

"Watch them, Hollister!"

The wind had stopped. I extended my burned hand toward the lamp again, then paused to look inquiringly at him. I heard a tiny puff, such as a child makes in blowing out a birthday candle. The lamp flickered. Before my hand touched the hot chimney, we were in darkness.

"It's here, Hollister! Help! Help!"

The table, with the dead lamp upon it, crashed over against me. I tried to wrest it aside. Failing in that, I found a passage between it and the wall. Somewhere in the thick darkness just ahead of me a bitter struggle was on. Arnold called my name again, but his voice was choked off. I leaped wildly toward the sound.

I found myself sprawled on the sofa. The body was gone. Without pausing to consider what that might mean, I blundered to my knees. Two struggling figures were between me and the window.

"Hold it, Arnold! I'm coming!"

The voice was mine, but I was hardly conscious of speaking the words. I threw myself toward them in a desperate semblance of a football tackle. It fell short. Just before I reached the wrestlers, one of them toppled backward out of the window. There was a hoarse scream.

The remaining one turned and came savagely at me. He was still silhouetted against the window. I could see that he was a little man. Perhaps that gave me courage. Or it may have been the fact that this seemed to have turned into a physical struggle. Despite my own small size, I was something of an athlete—far more so than Arnold. I was not afraid to try conclusions in this sort of fight.

My antagonist closed. He made no attempt to protect himself. Indeed, as my fingers reached for his throat, he laughed. Then I had him by the throat. My hands started to compress his windpipe.

Just as quickly, my grip relaxed again. His beard had brushed the backs of my fingers. At the same moment I had become aware that his skin was clammy

life. And I got back up here in time to relax *his* fingers from your throat, and that saved yours. Of course daylight enters into it, too. If ever dawn came just in time, it did last night."

My blurred brain picked out the one faint note of emphasis in his words.

"*Whose fingers?*" I whispered.

"Take it calmly, old man! I said I'd tell you everything—I will. You remember what I told you—that It might try to get possession of poor old Tantenberg's body? I was fighting *It* with will power and with light. But the lamp went out, and, well, in a word, It was successful."

I sat up. Horror was conquering my weakness.

"He's gone?"

Arnold shook his head slowly and smiled.

**"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against  
Principalities, against Powers; against the  
Rulers of the Darkness of this World"**

and quite cold. And there was no pulse in the throat. Utter horror enveloped me.

**T**HE laugh came once more. Cold fingers closed on my own throat. A stiff, rigid body leaned against me and slowly forced me backward. I went down into a great darkness, in which my senses throbbed like drums, and black clouds opened to receive me.

"Hollister! Little Hollister!"

I came up slowly from deeps within deeps, and at last opened my eyes in response to the repeated call. Arnold, one side of his face so bruised as to be almost unrecognizable, was bending over me. I was on his bed, and the blessed light of day filled the room.

Those were my first sensations. My next was that my throat was very sore. I put my hand to it gingerly, and found it bandaged. Arnold nodded, with a smile.

"Don't try to talk just yet, Hollister. I'll tell you everything. I don't know which of us is luckier to be here. I fell two stories and landed first in some bushes, then in a flower bed, and that saved my

"His poor, worn-out shell is on the couch in our room, just where it was placed last night. The undertaker should be here soon—I hope he will find nothing wrong. No, Hollister, old man—we can score up a victory; a defeat which ended in victory. It attained Its first objective—his body. It nearly attained its second—your death and mine. But It utterly failed in Its third—the indefinite possession of a mortal body in which to work its evil schemes. You and I and daylight thwarted It. There will be no second attempt. I don't know why, but there never is."

**A** VAGRANT thought crossed my mind.

It had no place in the incredible tragedy we had passed through, yet there it was.

"Arnold," I said, "if this is to be your life work, will you have to be thrown out of a two-story window in the course of every business engagement?"

He did not reply in words; he grinned. A little distorted, a little forced by the fact that half of his face was like a beefsteak, it nevertheless was the whole-some grin I knew so well.

# Inside Secrets of False Mediums and Their Marvels

By THEO ANNEMANN

*Concluding an eye-opening expose of "a racket in futures" from one who has looked behind the scenes*

**W**HAT is known as "the outline system" of readings by charlatan psychics and spiritual readers depends entirely upon native shrewdness and intuition, plus the ability to hand the innocent sitter "a line of talk" suitable to his or her character, education, and circumstances.

Such a reading is usually given without any resort to trickery. The method has for its basis a list of important conditions, associations and events which is fixed in the medium's mind and which is built upon and elaborated in the course of the reading. In using this basic list a skilful reader is careful to vary its application to the personality and appearance of the client.

First, however, the medium, in a preliminary chat with the sitter, endeavors to study his characteristics and to memorize details of his appearance. For, having noted the color of eyes, hair, complexion, shape of features, and any other physical idiosyncrasy, the medium is able to give more or less accurate descriptions of what are called "natural" friends, enemies and rivals.

Observe, too, that a medium begins a reading by closing his or her eyes, because it has been discovered that impressions are more easily received, and sitters more responsive, when the eyes are shut. Also, the medium always seeks physical contact in holding the hands of a sitter. It helps, through delicate and involuntary

muscular action on the part of the sitter, to keep the medium on the right track.

To proceed with the reading: the following subjects, and in the order given, are those which represent the fundamentals in the "outline" methods:

1. The present time.
2. Personal magnetism. Charm. Control over others.
3. Age of life. Sickness to look out for. Accidents.
4. Investments. Partnerships. Employment.
5. Best friends. Obstacles in pathway.
6. Enemies that bear

watching. Undecided state of mind.

7. Psychic powers. Premonitions. Judgment of human nature.

8. Marriages. Money conditions.

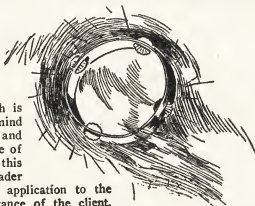
9. Warnings.

10. A change in affairs. Trips.

11. Surprises. Fortunate years, months, dates, and days.

12. The cause of all unfavorable affairs. Change and result.

The above twelve departments cover about everything in the life of a sitter, and it is up to the psychic to employ them to the best advantage. Suppose I give you a typical reading based on the foregoing twelve branches, which will apply to most persons in search of a "future." Here we go, then:



"I see that at the present time, things domestically and financially are not progressing as pleasantly as you would desire. In a manner of speaking, you go just so far and then you return directly from where you started. You seem to get no further ahead, and in proportion to the amount of energy expended on a given undertaking you are inadequately remunerated. In accordance to the effort put forth, you are not sufficiently rewarded.

**T**HE trouble is that you are surrounded by an evil influence, a disturbing element that causes delays, disappointments, losses and uncertainties to arise along your pathway; and until you have these influences removed and the forces harmonized and directed into their proper channels, you will not meet with the success to which you are entitled.

"Your personal magnetism is exceptionally strong, but at the present time, owing to the undecided state of your mind and the conditions affecting you, it is not directly under the control of your will. You possess the power to sway, charm, fascinate and control those whom you come in contact with, in a manner that would be advantageous to yourself; but you are using only a small part of this power you possess, in comparison with the amount it is possible for you to exercise. Development in that direction would materially assist you in the realization of your desires.

"The vibration now changes and I see what looks like a figure. Yes, it is a figure. You are destined to live quite a long life. You will attain the advanced age of eighty-six or eighty-seven years, and up to the seventy-first year of your life you should be remarkably free from personal injuries, bodily ills, or accidents of any kind. There will be a slight nervous condition, some stomach disorder, and a glandular disturbance later on, but these things will take care of themselves, so do

not worry about them, as the outcome will be to the good.

"Investments made later on in real estate should prove extraordinarily successful for you. In business dealings you should never affiliate yourself with another person in any way. You ought not to be in partnership with another, neither should you work for another person, for you do not like to have others dictate to you because you are thoroughly competent to manage your own affairs, and you know it.

"Those of the opposite sex are better friends to you than those of your own sex. Now I get the impression and influence of some person whose mind has acted rather strongly on your mind. Likewise, it seems that at times your mind has acted strongly on this person's mind, but there seems to be some obstacle, some unknown factor, or something that prevents this person from being to you exactly what you would like. It would seem that no matter what you do for this person, or how hard you try to please, you meet with apparent indifference. In reality, however, that is only in appearance, for this person is really naturally adapted to you and could make your life very happy and successful.

"Here I get the influence of another person you come in contact with, and it seems to be a woman with blue eyes and light hair. Indications show that you are in danger of being deceived by such a person. In all of your dealings with her do not depend too much upon her word, but keep your eyes open, so to speak, for in your dealings with her this person will prove deceitful. There is also another person, between the dark and light coloring, who is unworthy of your trust. In fact, there seem to be a number of persons with whom you come in contact who are jealous of you because of your success in a certain direction.

**A**T THE present time, however, while they are in no position to harm you, nor to cause you serious trouble in any way, you will have to watch them very closely. With these conditions about you as they are at present, these people place you in a state of indecision and you don't know exactly which course to pursue.

"Just now there are two things on your mind—two courses of procedure—and you don't know exactly which one to choose. You don't know whether to allow these



conditions to remain as they are for a while longer and await the outcome, or to try to make every effort to bring about this change in your life that you desire. It is this latter course that I would seriously advise you to take.

"You are a person who often receives impressions of just the way things are going to happen previous to their occurrence. These impressions or premonitions are almost invariably correct, but you do not always follow them. You have made serious mistakes in the past by disregarding them, and yet, on account of your psychic powers, you should always heed the warnings that come inwardly to you. It would prevent you from being deceived by designing persons. However, you are not deceived very often, as you are a good judge of human nature. In the past, though, you have been deceived by a person whom you were warned against, but it was a warning which you failed to heed.

"Two marriages show in your life, one of which is successful and the other but moderately successful. The first of the two is all that could be desired in every way. There is some money connected with you, in a rather hazy manner, that will come later on through another person, but which you will have some difficulty in getting. There will be a dispute about it, some delay, or some trouble in ascertaining the exact amounts, but nevertheless you will receive it.

**I** ALSO see a paper of some importance which you are going to be called upon to sign, and across this paper is crawling a green snake. This sign indicates that there is some deception connected with the paper. I must ask you to be very careful in regard to it. Floating in the air behind you is a large dark eye, which is an indication of somebody watching you for some reason. It warns you to be careful and seems to foretell the reception of some surprising news within a few

## As We Said Before:

GHOST STORIES has nothing but sympathy and encouragement for genuine psychic research and all honest attempts to ascertain the truth about life after death. But it has no excuse or tolerance for the charlatan who deliberately cheats the public in a realm that holds the highest and most sacred hopes of mankind.

For this reason, those connected with the magazine feel it is rendering a great service to all serious-minded men and women in opening its pages to Mr. Annemann's authoritative account of fake psychics and their methods.

Just as the United States Government considers counterfeiters and their currency as being against the vital interests of society, so does GHOST STORIES consider the "false prophets" of the supernatural as being inimical to the happiness of the believers and the progress of true understanding.

days. It is not going to be bad news, however, and is not of great importance.

"A person is going to come to you and impart information which will be of an import that you will be glad to hear. It is regarding another person and concerns something that will be said or done regarding their plans and intentions, with all of which you will be connected. You will also receive a letter at about this time, which will contain a surprise, an invitation, or an offer of some kind which will be unexpected.

"During this present year I foresee a change in the tide of your affairs. It seems to make a complete change in your life, but if it occurs with the conditions around you as they are now, it would prove detrimental and most unfavorable to you. This feeling now dissolves into a journey for you. The trip will combine both pleasure and profit for you.

"The years of 1931 and 1932 will prove to be highly eventful years for you because of a number of surprises and changes, all of which, however, will not be favorable. The best and most fortunate days of the month



for you are the second, twelfth, and twenty-second. This corroborates my theory that your life is completely dominated by the figure 2. Any business changes, transactions, or undertakings of importance, stand a much better chance of being successful for you if made upon one of your lucky days. During the week, Wednesday is the one day which seems to attune itself to your personality.

"Lastly, I wish to impress upon you that with the conditions around you as they are now, you are made to think that things are working against you. Because of these things that seem to go wrong no matter what you do or how hard you try, I can only assume that it is the direct result of what is psychologically termed 'antagonistic influence,' which must be surrounding you. This influence, which you can feel acting upon your nervous system at times, causes you to feel blue and discouraged. It is simply because some occult forces about you are out of harmony, and I would advise you to have these forces harmonized; the injurious influences removed, resulting in an entire and complete change of your life from what it is now, to what you want it to be. Obviously, it would also influence this other person in your life I spoke of, and it would bring about an idealistic state of love, harmony, happiness and success. Certainly, it would be everything that a human being could desire.

"Now, if there are any important questions or troubles in your mind which I have not answered during the course of this reading, you have the privilege of stating them, but after such a request please concentrate your entire mind upon these conditions or I will be unable to get the right vibration."

SO, in this manner, another reading has been given and another two dollars earned by telling you what amounts to exactly nothing but generalities, which apply to the life of anyone. It has always seemed strange to me that serious-minded people will honestly think afterwards that the medium has really told them things which no one but themselves knew. This is partially explained by realizing that when another person is mentioned during the reading, the description is always rather vague and never complete. The sitter's mind will immediately react and pick the one person in his life who might have

cause to be an enemy or friend, as the case may be.

It is not the medium who really tells of any particular person, but the sitter who catalogues the figures and places them. By his talk the medium has caused a series of pictures in the sitter's mind, and all of the characters are played by the sitter's own relatives and friends. Can it be wondered at, then, if the sitter goes away with a firm impression that he has been told, by an utter stranger, absolute facts about his private life and the people around him?

I offer this as the only explanation for such gullibility in the average person, who accepts and pays good money for such a reading.

THOSE working as "psychologists" make what they term their small-change on readings, but figure on bigger money through "come-back" business. They will always try to "case" a sitter. In order to explain this, let us suppose that a woman has some real estate that she wishes to sell, and the medium in the course of the reading answers this thought.

He tells the lady that he sees the future looking bright and rosy, but that many influences must be overcome before things will come her way. However, he continues, his work is not merely to tell people of their troubles but to help them if possible in realizing their desires. At this point the mystic will do some figuring and apparent "thinking" and will name a price of, say, \$14.50, for which he will take her case and put forth his power for her welfare.

He is certain to have the sitter sign a statement, as has been described, in order to safeguard himself. Easy payments can be arranged generally. The price already mentioned is not the highest by many dollars.

There are several famed psychics and spiritual advisers who are resting at the expense of the government because their ambitions ran into the thousands. Cases like these invite trouble because some people later on "come to" and realize that something is wrong. They are always quick to complain when there is much money at stake. Of course, others will decide to drop the matter for fear of showing themselves up as "easy marks." As long as not too much money enters the case the medium has merely legitimately

sold time for "advice" and this is perfectly legal.

"Finding a lost husband" is another of the old standard tricks, which is more or less another way of "casing" a sitter. Often a woman in the course of a reading will ask the seer to try and find her husband, who disappeared without leaving any trace.

Appealed to in this vital matter, the medium, after considerable mental effort, will get the impression of an address which he feels has some connection with the missing husband. This address is given the woman and it is always quite some distance away. The sitter is asked to write to her husband at this address, and the reading is over.

You can judge for yourself the state of excitement into which the sitter is put upon receiving such information, together with an address.

Needless to say, the letter is written without delay and mailed. Several days of waiting and suspense pass before a reply along this line comes back with the still-sealed letter of the sitter inside:

"I am returning your letter to Mr. — per your return address on the envelope. He had a room in my house here until the day before yesterday, when he received a telegram and went away suddenly leaving no word or address."

**D**OES the sitter become excited and place the medium upon a high pedestal of genuine psychic power? Yes, indeed! More than ever is she convinced by this evidence. Hadn't she almost reached her husband?

*Little does she dream that a distant confederate and friend of the medium is always ready to render service towards making a husband seem where he isn't.*

So the lady comes back to the "studio" again and tells the medium how successful he was. Invariably, she wants him to try

again, and is now in a state of mind which casts all caution to the winds.

The seer now tells her that conditions have changed a great deal, and that because of some agitation her husband is moving around rapidly and never stopping long at one place. He states that it will take a great deal of power to locate him under such erratic conditions, but that he will try. Another appointment is made three or four days ahead, but when the time comes the seer confesses little success and sets another date. At this meeting he explains that he has had some fair results, but that because of the amount of time he has expended in her behalf he will be forced to make an extra charge. This price always runs to an amount that the client can afford. It is generally twenty or fifty, and sometimes a hundred dollars. I have known of people who

would borrow fifteen dollars in order to make up the twenty-five necessary for a special consultation.

Well, to resume, a new address is obtained and again a letter is mailed off with great expectations. What happens? Another of the medium's confederates destroys the letter received and never answers it. Time passes, and when the anxious sitter again comes back to the medium he has only to say that the husband must not want to return. For the husband surely received the letter, or it would have been returned.

Very seldom does such a sitter realize that she has been gypped out of her money. And indeed this type is hard to convince that the psychic whom she has trusted so utterly is a fake.

Hundreds of times has this scheme been worked by the shady psychics, and will continue to be.

The profession does not depend entirely upon a "general" reading with which to hold their patronage. Subtle methods of trickery are brought into



play whenever they are deemed expedient.

There is an oft repeated story regarding a "blue book" among the mediumistic fraternity which contains data regarding everyone's private life and family affairs. But to this all-embracing extent there is no "blue book," nor could there be one of such completeness.

People that have a mania for fortunes and readings can never be told enough, and are always on the way to see a new and wonderful medium whom they have heard about. *Because of this, every business-like medium, psychic, and seer keeps a record or file of their various clients, with detailed notes as to the sitter's history, family, private life, and anything of interest which the medium has gleaned from them during a reading or two.*

**T**HERE is one psychic in St. Louis who has an index of 12,000 different people, and information regarding them.

If an itinerant psychic is in a certain clique and is on friendly terms with one or two of the permanent readers in a strange city, it is possible for him to secure a file or obtain any information from it that he may need. Here is the reason why a strange psychic to whom you have never been before can give you information during a reading which will convince you of his genuineness. You may not realize that he may have obtained this "dope" from another medium in the same city, to whom you have been several times.

Nearly all of the permanent readers have a large file of directories which cover most of the large cities in the country. Given a name, and knowing the city, they have at hand enough information to get well-started. While this is not 100% sure fire in every case, it is a source of information that none of the up-to-date psychics despises.

Coats left in the outer room of a "studio" bear fruit many times through papers and notes they may contain in the pockets. Even a lone hat may hold initials, and a label on coat or hat will invariably bear

the name of the town or city where purchased. All of those points are useful.

Quite a famous gentleman who gives readings and answers questions during his psychic entertainment, has made a custom of calling up his host or hostess, a few days before the engagement, and requesting the names of those who are expected to be present. His excuse is that, having appeared before so many people, he wishes to change his offering in case there will be present some who have witnessed his demonstration before. Given even a few names like this, he is able to look up advance information regarding the bearers of them and, during the course of the evening convince them of his occult powers.

Frequently, a medium will ask the sitter to write his name and several questions on which he desires enlightenment. Although the psychic apparently never comes in contact with, nor sees what was written, questions are answered and the name revealed during the course of the reading.

Perhaps if I describe methods for the accomplishing of this it may afford amusement and entertainment to readers who wish to entertain and puzzle their friends with a demonstration of the kind. For the purpose I will give an experience of my own with a psychic I consulted.

Entering the "reading room" I saw a small round table in the center of the floor with a chair on either side for the seer and the sitter. After an introductory greeting I was handed a piece of soft tablet paper about three by five inches, and a soft lead pencil.

**"W**RITE first the name of a spirit, preferably one very near to you," explained the medium. "It may be

either a man or a woman who is in the Great Beyond. Then write three important questions which you want to ask, and finally sign your correct name in full. After that please fold the paper three times from top to bottom and four times crosswise."

Saying this, he picked up the paper and



folded it as he had instructed me. I presume (in fact, I know) that he folded it in order to make certain that I would fold it the same way when I had finished writing. Opening and handing me the paper, he walked across the room and apparently read from a book until I told him that I was ready.

But from the pages of this book I know he took a duplicate piece of paper which was folded in the same manner, palmed it in his left hand, and returning to the table, sat down opposite me. He rested his left hand on the table, but as the back of his hand was towards me I could in no way see the paper or suspect that it was under his palm.

My folded paper was on the table where I had placed it, and picking it up with his right hand, the medium explained that he wanted me to hold it tightly in the palm of my left hand. As he said this he placed the paper in the palm of his own left hand, right on top of the dummy paper he had there. At the same time, he inserted his right thumb under the dummy and turned the two papers over together. They looked like one paper, as if he were just showing me how I was to hold it. This left the paper I wrote against his palm and the dummy on top.

**T**HEN he raised the dummy into the air about fifteen inches with his right hand, and now the "psychology" of the move became apparent. As he raised his right hand with the dummy in full view, his left hand slid to the edge of the table and my genuine slip was dropped into his lap. His eyes were continuously darting back and forth from my eyes to the slip in his raised right hand.

Suddenly, he brought it down and once more—very openly this time—put it on his

left palm. Then he pressed it into my left palm and asked me to hold it tightly. He was very careful during this time to let me see that his hands were otherwise empty.

He continued with his talk and went into a general reading. His left hand dropped to his lap as he talked and opened the folded slip there. Meanwhile his right hand was on the table, and from a movement of his body at this time, I think he clipped the opened paper between his knee and the table top so that it couldn't get



away, as he now brought back his left hand to top of table. Opening a small drawer on his side, he removed a small pad of the paper I had used. He took the pencil, and placing the pad very close to his edge of the table asked me my birthdate, which he wrote down. He proceeded with a short horoscope and, after a little

figuring, told me my lucky days of the month.

It was during this time that I presume he read my opened paper on his knee, because he could look down past the pad without my noticing or being able to see the direction in which he was looking. Tearing off the top sheet, he gave it to me to keep. Incidentally it bore his name, address and telephone number.

Leaning back in his chair, he continued with the reading for a few minutes and then acted as if he couldn't get any impressions. So picking up a match he openly took the paper from my hand (the dummy) and burned it on an ashtray. Then, seeming more at ease, he continued, and during the next few minutes he brought answers to my questions into the reading. All this time he was playing and toying with the pad, which wound up on his knee several times. At the finish he opened the drawer and carelessly tossed the pad in it and closed it again. There is no doubt in my mind

that my paper went into the drawer under the pad.

Answering my queries, the psychic went about it in this manner:

"I see a rather dark shadow, which is standing in back of you. It seems to be a man who is resting his hand on your right shoulder. Over your head in letters of fire is the name John. [I had written the name of John Hayes.] He is speaking very low and says, 'Tell Theodore that I am with him to-day. Oh, I want to help him so much!'"

"MR. SQUIRES," continued the psychic,

"John says that he knows you. Do you recognize him? [I answered in the affirmative.] He says that you shouldn't lose any sleep over that investment. Everything looks bad at this particular time, but it is only due to a general slump and things will take a decided turn for the better within a few days."

In a similar manner the other questions were answered. I had signed my name as Theodore Squires, and a careful perusal of the above will show you how deftly and subtly the names were brought into the reading in a way that was most effective.

There is one St. Louis reader whom I made a special point to see who plies his trade successfully in that "closed" city owing to the fact that he is protected through his Spiritualistic connections. He leaves nothing undone to make his readings as complete as possible. He has an interesting method of getting his information—one which is "clean" and entails little effort. He uses printed blanks for your name, address, three questions and a wish.

When I visited him the medium sat at a small desk with one side against the wall, and about one yard from the corner of the room, which gave him just enough space to sit behind it. His back and left side were thus in the corner, while I was facing him with my right side to the wall.

On the desk was a stack of envelopes. Taking the top one, the medium apparently placed my folded paper inside and sealed it. What really happened, however, was that my paper was left on the back of the envelope and held there with his left thumb. Inside the envelope was a duplicate dummy which had been placed there beforehand.

The medium wet the flap and sealed it

down with his right fingers, and the right hand then gave me the envelope. Just before this, however, his left thumb pulled the paper off the back into his left hand. He was standing as he did this, and as his right hand gave me the envelope, he sat down and his left hand dropped and pulled up his trouser leg, as a man will do in sitting down.

From here on the procedure was practically the same as I have described. After awhile he had me burn the envelope. As there was a desk lamp between us, I could see the shadow of the paper in the envelope and should have been convinced that I was actually burning up my own writing.

Followed the reading. It wasn't until a few weeks later, after I had been in contact with several persons who investigate this "profession" that I learned the reason for the position of the desk and the exact operation of the medium.

When the medium sat down he merely dropped my paper into a paddle or sort of flat scoop which was being held by his wife, "behind the scenes." In other words the baseboard in this corner of the room and to the left of the medium had been cut to make a trap through which she could work from the next room. Opening the paper, she copied it clearly on another sheet and pushed it back where the psychic could read it while looking down. In the meantime, she looked up all of the information possible regarding me and sent this through the aperture also.

But in my case the medium was sadly out of luck, as I was too far from home and was not using my right name, anyway. I had realized that he looked downward during the reading, but figured that he was reading from his lap, as usual. I had left with the idea that he was extremely clever with his hands at opening and controlling the paper, because of their being in view practically all of the time; but this later disclosure unveiled his seeming skill.

**T**HERE are numerous and clever ways of getting information from the writing of the sitter. The two described are, however, the basic ones which are elaborated upon.

I can only lay down certain rules which, if adhered to by the sitter, will very quickly prove the medium either fraudulent or genuine:

Never leave anything in an outer room, or out of your sight, which may furnish information about yourself in any way.

If you do no writing, say nothing during the reading except Yes and No.

Don't offer the slightest bit of information at any time. If necessary to give your name, give any except your real one. If the medium is genuine, his power should instantly tell them that you are misinforming him.

If you must do some writing, it is necessary to take double precautions. Never write on the top sheet of a pad and tear it off—you may be leaving a readable impression inside the pad. Always write on one piece of paper only, and don't back it up with anything except something of your own. Remember, it is best not to trust an article in a medium's room.

Always be careful that the medium actually has his back turned to you when you are writing, and that you mask the writing from both back, front and sides. With your thumb nail make a nick on both sides of the folded paper. You can see this across the table and can always tell if the paper is the one you wrote on, or another. Keep your eyes on that paper.

If the paper leaves your sight for a split second you may have cause for suspicion. If it wasn't necessary, the medium

would be only too careful to keep it in full view all of the time.

Watch the eyes of the medium throughout the reading. If your questions are written, take it for granted that he has to read them sometime, no matter what method he may use, and his eyes will give him away sooner or later.

**S**UMMING up, I think I have gone into the entire matter thoroughly and fairly, though I shall probably reap nothing but abuse from the ladies and gentlemen who apply themselves to this money-making profession to the detriment of the innocent public.

The genuine, honest and faithful followers of the Spiritualistic religion should have cause to thank me for my effort toward separating the chaff from the wheat.

*Law cannot and never will stop the fraudulent practices. Only ruthless exposure can do that. A medium accepts only one sitter at a time and the law requires more than one witness to convict a person.*

Finally, if you are seriously interested in psychic phenomena, devote your intelligence to the discovery and support of the true variety. The "false prophets" do not need you, for, alas, their victims are always too many.

THE END

## BE ON HAND FOR THE MARCH ISSUE

**R**ESPONDING to what our readers tell us they want in this magazine, we have prepared a feast for their varied and decided tastes in the next number of **GHOST STORIES**, on sale February 20th.

Those who want a strong horror note will find it in "By Rope and Fire" and "Mummy Number 249"—the latter one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's greatest occult tales.

Those who want the ultra fantastic need but read "The Man With the Four Arms" and "Prehistoric Phantom"—two of the most gripping yarns ever spun by fertile imagination.

Those who want gentle, tender themes of the supernatural, with eternal hope underlying all earthly happenings, will read and re-read "None So Blind—"

Those who want Truth instead of Imagination will applaud our choice of "The Psychic Detective," the story of a real man now living in the United States.

And the serials and Departments are, as usual, strong and thought-compelling features.

Get This Number  
And Recommend It to Others

**JOSHUA MELLEN**, a retired shoe manufacturer, touring Europe with his niece, Grace Gordon, purchases the ancient Hungarian castle of Schlangenfels, and has it transported to America. Stone for stone, it is re-erected on the Hudson River Palisades. Even the dozen coffins containing the bones of the ancestors of Count Maurus Garati, the owner, are taken along and placed in the crypt.

All this was done against the solemn advice of a Professor Florian, who warned Mr. Mellen that the fiendish Count Marco Garati, his wife, and sister, who were burned at the stake for sorcery in the Sixteenth Century, still haunted Schlangenfels. Later, Professor Florian was found dead in his bed with sinister punctures in his throat. But the shoe manufacturer, stubborn and self-willed, was undeterred. He not only brings the castle but its owner, Count Maurus Garati, to America. And before Schlangenfels is completed in its New World setting, evil powers seem to be at work.

A young architect, Donald Blades, is in charge of the work on the castle. He is in love with Grace. The Hungarian Count also wants to marry the girl. Donald and Grace find themselves lined up against Count Maurus and a cohort of his, a Laurence Bantry, who is a medium. Uncle

*A ghastly figure revealed itself above the hole of the oubliette! The hideous face peered out beneath matted hair*



## The EVIL

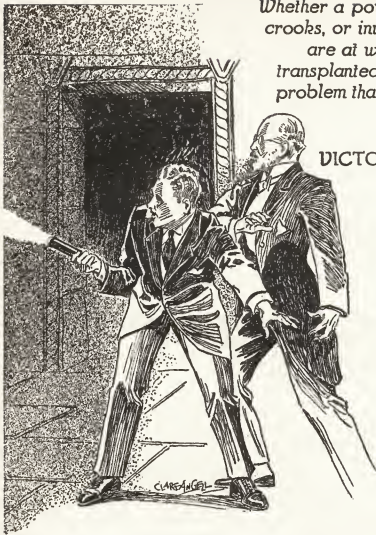
Joshua seems to have fallen under the influence of these two men, Bantry, in his trances having apparently summoned the spirit of Joshua's dead wife.

During one of the seances a cry and a crash are heard. In front of the open door of a safe in which Mr. Mellen keeps a large sum of money in gold is found the lifeless body of "Whitey" Smith, a well-known second-story man. Again, as in the case of Professor Florian, punctures are discovered in the dead thief's throat, and



Whether a powerful gang of crooks, or invisible demons are at work in the transplanted castle is the problem that confronts us

By  
VICTOR ROUSSEAU



*"That's the crook who opened the safe the last time!" Donald shouted. Masters shot a cry of warning at him as he sprang forward*

## THREE

*his body appears to be perfectly bloodless.*

Hardly has the excitement subsided when Grace is seen walking in her sleep, in the castle chapel, and conversing with invisible companions. Donald rescues her as she faints. To make matters still worse, Uncle Joshua is missing. The young architect, together with Tim Rourke, the gatekeeper of Schlangenfels, after a long search find the old gentleman imprisoned in a bottle-shaped dungeon called an oubliette, beneath the floor of the crypt.

BY THE afternoon of the following day Uncle

Joshua was not much the worse for his experiences in the crypt, though he was suffering from a bad cold.

"I tell you I don't know how it happened," the old man declaimed to Donald. "I'd gone into my bedroom, and I thought I heard Grace calling me from the bridge. When I got to the balcony I saw it wasn't Grace at all, but a strange lady in some of the queer new styles they're wearing in Paris nowadays. She was on the bridge, and I supposed Tim had let her in.

"She beckoned to me and started speaking in some foreign lingo I couldn't make head or tail out of, except that it didn't sound like French to me. I thought she'd lost her way, and I went on the bridge to see what I could do for her. Then a sort of red cloud seemed to settle down, and next thing I knew I was choking in that hell-hole underneath the cellar, and if you hadn't found me, I reckon I'd have passed out mighty quick."

Donald nodded gravely.

"Tim Rourke swears he didn't let anybody in," continued Joshua, "and all I've got to say is, there must be some secret way into this place that ain't been discovered yet. Guess it was chloroform she used, but how she got me down to that hole beats me!

"But I tell you one thing, Blades: I'm through with that precious pair, Count Maurus and Bantry. You thought they were pulling the wool over my eyes. Well, they weren't. I was just trying them out—seeing how far they'd go. I was wise to their tricks from the beginning. And I'm giving orders to Tim Rourke not to let them inside this place again.

"YES, sir, there's no man can fool me with his talk of spirits. That Whitey Smith and the foreign woman were part of a gang of crooks laying to get my money, and they'll find they've tackled a mighty hard proposition in Joshua Mellen."

Donald agreed. In spite of what he had seen in the chapel, he was convinced that Uncle Joshua had been the victim of a gang in which Count Maurus and Laurence Bantry were ringleaders. He heartily approved of the old man's decision, though he suspected that Uncle Joshua had not been quite so free from Bantry's influence as he pretended.

"I'll make it hot for those two fellers when I get well," Uncle Joshua promised.

Later, Donald encountered Bridget Muldoon and said he was sorry she had decided to leave.

"Lave this place, Mr. Blades, with that poor girl lyin' there so swate and patient, and her mim'ry all gone?" exclaimed Bridget indignantly. "No, Mr. Blades, the devil and all his fiends won't drive me forth!"

Bridget's terror of the night before had been succeeded by a dogged determination to see the thing to a finish. Tim Rourke, too, was resolved to stand by Uncle Joshua and Grace until the fiends had been exorcised from New Schlangenfels.

The rest of the servants, however, had taken leave in a body. No money on earth, they declared, would induce them to spend another night in that place of horror.

It was quite true, as Bridget had said, that Grace had lost her memory. Of the events in the chapel she had not the slightest recollection. She believed that she had

suffered from a fainting spell, and had been carried up to her room.

Listless and apathetic, the girl seemed to Donald to have undergone some queer sort of mental change which baffled him. It was almost as if the whole of her personality was not present. Her former vivid interest in life had gone. And the situation at Schlangenfels no longer had any particular meaning for her.

"I hope Uncle Joshua will set detectives on the trail of that gang of crooks who are trying to break in here to rob," she said.

Which agreed exactly with Donald's own sentiments. Only, formerly Grace and he had quarrelled because she had insisted that the troubles at Schlangenfels had a supernatural significance.

When Donald found out that Grace remembered hardly anything of her trip abroad, or of the purchase of Schlangenfels, he grew alarmed. He had heard of Masters, the psychiatrist, who had recently created a stir in medical circles by claiming that insanity was due, in most cases, to demonic possession, and that he had cured numerous cases by hypnotism.

Although he scouted this theory, in a moment of desperation he sat down and wrote to Masters, with Uncle Joshua's permission, asking him whether he could come to the castle for the purpose of treating Grace.

Three days later he received the following letter.

My dear sir:

I have been interested in the matter of Mr. Mellen's difficulties, and had, in fact, been considering asking permission to come down and investigate conditions at the castle. You may judge, therefore, that your invitation was highly welcome to me. In fact I have put aside all my other work, and handed over my patients to my colleague, with the purpose of probing these matters to their depth. I shall arrive at an early date.

WHICH was going a little farther than

Donald had bargained for. He decided not to show this letter to Uncle Joshua, who was now rabid against spiritualism, but merely to inform him that Masters would be his guest for a few days.

It might have been coincidence, or it might not, but Count Maurus and Laurence Bantry returned to Schlangenfels from their trips at precisely the same moment. And it was the tones of Uncle

Joshua's voice that brought Donald hurrying down from his room, where he had been casting up some accounts.

"You're a pair of cheats and thieves and fakers!" stormed Uncle Joshua. "You thought you'd got me in your power, but I was watching you. As for you, Bantry, I'll admit I was hoping to get evidence enough to send you to jail and rid the country of a scoundrel for a considerable time, though not nearly so long as you deserve. And as for you, Garrett,"—Uncle Joshua unconsciously resumed his old appellation for the Count—"take yourself off, and the quicker the better!"

"Ha!" ejaculated Count Maurus, turning pale. "So you buy my ancestral castle at a preposterously low rate, you lure me over to this country for what you are pleased to call a job, which I understood to be a part of the contract, and now you kick me out without ceremony."

"Yep," replied Uncle Joshua, who was in his best form. "If you think you got anything on me, go to a lawyer."

A sneer came over the Count's face. "Bah!" he cried. "I have heard of Yankee tricks. But I thought Joshua Mellen was a gentleman and a man of honor."

"Not by your standards, Garrett!" retorted Uncle Joshua, doubling up his fists as if ready for physical violence.

Stuttering uninterpretable threats, Count Maurus departed hurriedly in the wake of the more prudent Laurence Bantry.

If Donald had had any lingering doubts as to whether the difficulties at New Schlangenfels were of ghostly or mundane origin, they were dispelled effectively when, arising the following morning, he discovered that Uncle Joshua's safe had been opened again.

**I**T WAS Donald who had persuaded Uncle Joshua to have it removed secretly to the upper floor on which Donald had established his office. But the burglars had evidently obtained accurate knowledge of its location, and the detectives who were summoned from New York expressed the opinion that some of the servants who had left Schlangenfels were responsible. In fact, they professed to be able to identify two of them as much wanted crooks.

The solid steel had been opened by means of the oxy-acetylene torch. Five or six thousand dollars had been taken, together with some valuable pieces of jewelry belonging to Grace, and, even worse, from

Donald's point of view, certain plans of his for the restoration of an ancient wing of the castle had vanished.

"Get the goods on that pair of crooks, Sergeant," Uncle Joshua told the detective who was assigned to the case. "I don't care what it costs me. Reckon I've given that Garrett fellow leeway enough. I want him put behind the bars for twenty years."

Three days later the police reported that Count Maurus had been subjected to the third degree, but nothing definite could be proved against him. Now he was under the surveillance of a firm of private detectives engaged by Uncle Joshua.

**L**AURENCE BANTRY had not been found, but the police hoped to get on his trail speedily.

"You say it was the night before last you were third-degreed that Count fellow, huh?" snorted Uncle Joshua. "Well, here's where you've slipped up in your dates or something, Sergeant. He was prowling around this place night before last."

The detective smiled tolerantly. "Couldn't have been, Mr. Mellen."

"Couldn't, huh? I'll prove it to you," said Uncle Joshua. "Blades, you go and get Tim and Bridget right away, will you?"

In a few minutes Bridget and Tim Rourke appeared.

"If that Count Maurus was in the police station the night before last, all I got to say is, he's got a double," said Tim Rourke. "Didn't I catch him prowlin' around the chapel, you having told me to kape a close watch, Mr. Mellen? And Bridget here will bear me out in what I'm sayin'."

"And that's God's truth," said Bridget. "Dressed up in thim queer clothes of his, and slinkin' like he was on wheels instead of legs. And when I called Tim, and we thought we'd got him cornered in the chapel, divil a sign of him was there."

"Yiss, and we seen more than that, Mr. Mellen," said Tim. "We seen thim too female harlequins in thim new Paris fashions."

Bridget nodded in confirmation.

"Well, it's either a case of an exceedingly clever plot, with able confederates, or else it's a case of too much imagination," said the sergeant. "The man calling himself Count Maurus Garati was in the police station from noon the day before yesterday until some time yesterday morning, and I've a dozen witnesses to that fact."

## Was Uncle Joshua fooling the two crooks, or nad he fallen under the influence of Count Maurus and Bantry again?

"And who wouldn't have imagination, with thim fiends and hobgoblins and leprechauns peeking out from ivery hole and corner of the place!" cried Bridget indignantly.

"Which reminds me," said Tim, "that I left a fellow shtandin' at the drawbridge, waitin' to be let in, and the name he give me was something like Masther's. A tall, middle-aged feller, with a beard, and the biggest and blackest bag I ever seen."

"Doctor Masters!" exclaimed Donald. "Go down and let him in at once, Tim!"

**JONATHAN MASTERS** was a commanding personality of about fifty who at once won Uncle Joshua's and Donald's confidence. His first act was to deposit his bag in the room that was assigned to him; his second to summon Tim and Bridget into conference, the argument having been proceeding in a desultory way immediately after his arrival. The detective-sergeant, his feelings outraged by the servants' outspoken declaration in favor of the spooks, had departed without waiting longer.

"I may as well say that I am already in possession of most of the facts of this affair," said Masters. "I have also studied the legends connected with the original Schlangenfels. Before seeing my patient, however, I'll be glad to be informed as to anything unusual that may have occurred here that has not been made public."

"Unusual?" shouted Uncle Joshua. "Why, the damn crooks sent a woman to chloroform me, and then they clapped me into that black hole under the vault!" And he proceeded to give Masters a stormy account of his experiences.

"And you two are sure you have seen figures lurking about inside the castle?" Masters asked Bridget and Tim. "Well, describe them to me!" As he spoke, he produced a book from an inner pocket, an ancient volume bound in brown calf.

"Well, sorr," said Tim, "I don't mind tellin' you, there's something queer about the gentleman sperrit. He looks like Count Maurus, and yet again he don't."

"Which is the truth," said Bridget, "for

I've seen him twinty toimes, if I've seen him once. His eyebrows mate acrost his nose. And thim hands of his!"

"His hands?" asked Masters.

"Great white hands, covered with scars and hair," cried Tim. "I'd hate for to let him git them claws on me!"

"Nonsense!" snorted Uncle Joshua.

"How about the women?" asked Doctor Masters. "How many of them have you seen?"

"There's two of thim famales, sorr," said Tim. "There's the old one, with white hair and a sort of prisince to her, and there's the young one, who's kind of swate and throubled."

"But the eyes of her! The devil's in thim!" groaned Bridget.

"The younger woman is the one you saw on the bridge, Mr. Mellen?" asked Masters.

"Maybe she is and maybe she ain't," cried Uncle Joshua. "But the whole thing's as plain as Punch. Donald Blades here left some secret opening into the castle when he drew up the plans"—Donald shook his head—"and that gang dresses up and comes in through it, hoping to scare me."

"But what have they to gain?" asked Masters. "Your safe has been rifled twice, and surely they cannot imagine that the treasures of Castle Schlangenfels will prove easy picking. Besides, they know that the place is watched day and night by detectives. . . . Did Count Maurus bring any companions across the water with him?"

"Ugo!" shouted Donald.

**AN EXCLAMATION** escaped Uncle Joshua's lips. It was extraordinary, but neither had thought of the slinking Bosnian for days.

"Count Maurus's servant," said Donald. "He was personally attached to him, and after Mr. Mellen ordered the Count from the house, nobody thought about the man. He must have been gone for some time."

Masters, without replying, opened the volume in his hand. It was a German book, with steel engravings scattered here and there throughout it. Masters held out

the volume to Tim and Bridget, indicating one of these, which occupied a full page.

"Does this mean anything to either of you?" he asked. "Or this?" He turned to another page engraving.

"Merciful hivins," shrieked Bridget, "thim's the two famales Tim and me's seen in the castle!"

Talking over the situation, the next day, Masters said:

"I strongly recommend, Mr. Mellen, that your niece be transferred to my private sanitarium in Connecticut."

"You mean to tell me that Grace is out of her mind?" demanded Uncle Joshua.

"I am not prepared to go as far as that," Masters responded. "I should prefer not to offer a diagnosis just now. But I am sure that she will recover much more quickly away from the influences that are at present surrounding her."

"Nonsense!" shouted Uncle Joshua. "Grace is going to stay right here with me, and I'll have no more of this ghost talk. Once we get our hands on some of that crowd, the whole scheme will blow up."

"You stay here and take charge of Grace, Doctor Masters, and I'll pay you anything you like. But I don't want to hear anything more about ghosts."

"I SHALL certainly be more than glad to remain here for a while," responded Masters, "but it is my duty to tell you that I think your niece would be better off elsewhere."

Grace kept to her room all day. She seemed too listless to care about leaving it. Donald, who visited her constantly, was more than ever under the impression that some part of her personality was missing.

Somehow she was aware of the proposal to transfer her from the castle.

"Donald, I don't want them to send me away," she pleaded. "Don't let uncle send me to that doctor's sanitarium. I don't trust him, Donald."

"Why, my dear girl, Doctor Masters is an expert physician," Donald told her.

"You can't fool me, Donald. He wants to shut me up in an insane asylum. And there's nothing the matter with me. I'm just tired. I've been overdoing things. I love it here. And I don't believe a word about those spooks and spirits, Donald."

It seemed to Donald that she was overdoing her protestations. However, she was

overjoyed when Donald told her that her uncle had refused to fall in with Masters's plans.

"I'm quite well, truly,



"Oh, Maurus, I've just told Donald our secret," said Grace with a simper

Donald," she said. "In a few days I'll be about again just as I used to."

Although Donald was in full agreement with Joshua Mellen that the whole talk about ghosts should be stopped as quickly as possible, he was conscious of a latent sense of uneasiness. Donald was not so stubborn as Uncle Joshua, and he had to admit that certain things that had happened had been decidedly queer.

He attempted several times to get Masters to commit himself to an opinion. But Masters was singularly uncommunicative. Indeed, he spent much less time with his

**Although Donald was in full agreement with Joshua Mellen that the whole talk about ghosts should be stopped, certain things that had happened were decidedly queer**

patient than one would have expected from a resident physician.

He passed most of his days studying the collection of books that he had had expressed to him. Most of these were in Latin, one or two in German, and the ancient leather binding and the style of type showed that they were sixteenth-century editions.

Donald had almost given up hope of having a frank talk with the doctor when one day Masters approached him much more cordially than was his habit.

"WELL, Blades, we're getting on," he said, rubbing his hands together.

"Do you really think all this business is going to be settled, then?" asked Donald, inspired by the other's sanguine air.

"Undoubtedly," replied the physician, with a rather grim smile. "Though we've got a bigger job on our hands than I at first imagined. As soon as I've completed my preliminaries, Blades, I'm going to ask you to accompany me down into the crypt, and show me those coffins, and the *oubliette* in which Mr. Mellen was imprisoned."

"I'll be very glad to," answered Donald.

"Just now," went on the doctor, "I have a rather difficult interview with Mr. Mellen, and I shall be obliged if you will accompany me, and lend me the weight of your support."

Somewhat mystified, Donald accompanied Masters to the library, where Uncle Joshua was studying his books on spiritualistic subjects.

After a few remarks had been exchanged, Doctor Masters said:

"I understand, Mr. Mellen, that you have given me *carte blanche* to investigate this affair to the bottom?"

"You go ahead for all you're worth, Masters," responded Uncle Joshua, with violent cordiality.

"I propose," answered Masters, "to dispense with the aid of the police altogether."

"Proposed, seconded, and passed," said Uncle Joshua. "It ain't a case for the po-

lice, and that's all there is to it. They're the biggest pinheads I've ever run up against yet. They can't find that Bantry fellow and they let the Count go. The two leaders of the gang, and they let them both slip through their fingers!"

"What I wish to suggest," said Masters, is that we get hold of Bantry and Count Maurus and bring them back here ourselves."

"What?" shouted Uncle Joshua.

"If necessary, I should like your authority to pay them a salary," Masters continued.

"Bring back those crooks? What for? Not if I know it!" stormed Uncle Joshua.

For three or four minutes he raged, while Masters waited patiently. Uncle Joshua paced the floor, shouting and denouncing the pair of fugitives at the top of his lungs.

"What's the idea bringing them two crooks back again?" he demanded.

"Well, Mr. Mellen, didn't you just say that the police had let them slip through their fingers?" asked Masters.

"That's just what they did! Ought to have that precious pair of scoundrels behind bolts and bars!" Uncle Joshua stormed.

"And didn't you agree with me that the police ought to be kept out of this business?"

"Yep, but why are you cross-examining me? I ain't forgotten what I said."

"Then don't you see, Mr. Mellen, that we can meet both these points by ourselves having Count Maurus and Laurence Bantry here."

"YEP but—a salary! You said to pay them a salary!" roared Uncle Joshua.

"I consider their presence here absolutely essential, Mr. Mellen," said the doctor calmly. "Outside, they may be in a position to do us untold mischief. Here, they are powerless. The salary will keep them here, and if necessary, force can be used."

Uncle Joshua indulged in another out-

burst of violence, but it was shortlived. It was clear that, like the shrewd man he was, he had been convinced by Masters's argument.

"Well, I'll hire them to come back," he conceded. "Arrange to pay them what you like, but I wash my hands of the whole business."

"On the contrary," said Masters, "I am going to ask you to overcome your natural resentment and play a part which I am sure you will be able to carry to complete success. I am going to suggest that you pretend to believe in Bantry as formerly."

Suddenly Uncle Joshua grinned, and Donald knew that the doctor had won. "But how are you going to get them without calling in the detectives?" he asked.

"I have a small but efficient private organization of my own," replied Masters. "I think I can promise to have them both

to go further. I accept the apology in the spirit in which it is offered."

"Don't know as I was exactly apologizing," snapped Uncle Joshua, with a return of his old belligerency. "However, it ain't necessary to go further into that point. I'm asking you two to work for me and help clean up things in general and—what the heck!"

Staring over Count Maurus's shoulder, as if he had seen a ghost, Uncle Joshua looked the picture of terror. His teeth began to chatter audibly.

AND Donald, following the direction of Uncle Joshua's gaze, felt his teeth begin to chatter too.

A moment before there had been nothing behind the two visitors except the broad expanse of the inner court, and the departing form of Tim Rourke in the dis-

**Count Marco Garati, his wife and sister were burned centuries ago, but they never died. By means of their power of sorcery they were able to project their etheric bodies while alive**

back inside the castle within forty-eight hours."

Donald hardly believed that the doctor would be able to make good his word, but he realized that he had underestimated his powers when, just about forty-eight hours later Tim Rourke escorted Count Maurus and Laurence Bantry through the courtyard.

Whatever means Masters had employed to discover their whereabouts, both looked so well pleased with themselves that Donald had no doubts the doctor had remunerated them well for their return.

UNCLE JOSHUA, coached as to the reception he was to accord them, had entered into the spirit of the play. He welcomed the two with outstretched hands.

"Last time we parted we had a few words," he said. "I guess I may have been a bit hasty. I'm willing to forgive and forget, and if you gentlemen care to meet me in the same spirit, and help clean up this peck of trouble I've been having, you won't need to regret it."

"Mr. Mellen," responded Count Maurus, with his blandest air, "it is not necessary

to go further. While now, immediately behind Count Maurus, bland, smiling, imperturbable, there stood the figure of the Bosnian servant, Ugo!

"How did you get here?" roared Uncle Joshua, recovering his self-possession with a visible effort.

"Me stay here all the time," responded Ugo politely. "Me no wish to intrude myself. Me see my master coming, and me come for him to greet, *nicht wahr?*"

In the days that followed everything seemed to come to a standstill. In spite of Doctor Masters's implied promise to give Donald the benefit of the ideas he had formed, Masters continued to busy himself with his books and certain researches of a quasi-chemical nature that he seemed to be making.

And, as the days went by, Donald could not for the life of him determine whether Uncle Joshua was fooling the two crooks, or whether he had made one of his sudden changes and had fallen under Bantry's sway once more. If he was playing a part, it was certainly magnificently done.

His attitude toward Count Maurus had



become almost one of respectful homage. He had again begun to read such works as "The Sevenfold Nature of the Spheres," and "A Voice from Summerland."

"Mr. Bantry thinks maybe I kidnaped myself when I was in a condition of ecstasy," Uncle Joshua complacently explained to Donald one day. "He says how high-strung natures like mine, who've been repressed all their lives, are apt to break out that way."

**A**LTOGETHER, things were beginning to look ominous. And Donald was very unhappy over Grace. The girl appeared to have recovered her strength, but she was still listless, and apparently uninterested in anything that was happening. She kept to her room a good deal, but Bridget assured Donald that her fears of sleeping had subsided. Also she ate heartily, and Uncle Joshua was confident that she was quite recovered.

There had been no return of any disturbances since Masters's strategy had brought back Laurence Bantry and Maurus.

"Just as soon as all this public talk stops," said Uncle Joshua, "I'm going to take Grace for a trip to Europe. It's all been a mountain made out of a molehill. I ain't an obstinate man, and maybe I've misjudged Garrett and Mr. Bantry. It's only fools are so set in their opinions that they can't take in new ideas."

Donald was convinced then that Uncle Joshua had fallen into the power of the confederates once more. He knew that Bantry had again been giving seances in the library, and he suspected that "Queenie" and "Black Badger" had been up to their old tricks.

Grace had taken a great liking to Doctor Masters, and insisted that his treatments were doing her a world of good.

In short, New Schlangenfels seemed at last to be settling down to a much needed period of repose, though it had been found impossible to get servants to come in to work even by the day, so great was the terror of the place that had taken hold of the neighboring population.

Ugo cooked, Bridget combined the duties of lady's maid for Grace, and housekeeper, while Tim Rourke kept the gate and did various odd chores and duties.

Donald was growing desperately miserable as the days went by. His own work had temporarily come to a standstill during the winter season, and time hung heav-

ily upon his hands. Neither Masters nor Uncle Joshua seemed to have any need for him.

Opposition he could face and beat down, but now it looked as if his position at the castle was rapidly becoming a superfluous one. And the old relationship with Grace had come to an end.

They had been as good as engaged, but the engagement seemed simply to have lapsed.

At last he took courage and went to Grace about it.

And the moment he entered her apartment he saw that the old frankness had vanished utterly. There was nothing at all of the girl whom he had known, whom he still adored with all his heart.

She rose languidly. "Why, Donald, this is very charming of you, coming in to see me," she said. "Do sit down. How are you getting along with my uncle? And what about those plans of yours for restoring the real, original Schlangenfels? Do you know, I am positively thrilled to be the occupant of a real castle. Only one thing you left out when you reconstructed it."

"What was that?" asked Donald.

"Why wasn't there an ancestral ghost or something?" queried Grace lightly. "You ought to have brought it with you, Donald. That would have been more thrilling still."

And she looked at him with a humorous smile upon her lips, and Donald realized that Grace had, in very truth, forgotten all about the incidents in New Schlangenfels.

Yet, as she looked at him, her eyes grew troubled for a moment, and she seemed to be trying to remember. An effort that failed utterly, for a moment later the girl had regained her former poise. Cold, hard, scintillating—no, this was not his Grace at all.

"And now, Donald, as an old friend of mine," she went on, "I am going to make you the first recipient of a little secret, and I know you'll be delighted. It—it's quite a romance, you know."

**G**RACE was giggling now—something she never did before.

"It's about Count Maurus and me. You see, I—we—well, the fact is the Count asked me to marry him when Uncle and I were in Hungary, and—well, he asked me again last night, and I've consented.

"But for the present it's to be kept a secret from Uncle Joshua, because Maurus

and I both feel that he ought to make good first, and show that he's going to justify Uncle Joshua's faith in him. So it's a secret between us. And I'm trusting you not to let Uncle Joshua know till I give you leave. I can trust you, can't I?"

"Yes, you can trust me, Grace," answered Donald with passionate emphasis. "Always, no matter what may happen."

"But what do you mean, 'what may happen,' Donald?" asked the girl, looking at him with the same set smile upon her lips.

Then of a sudden the smile faded. A transient look of perplexity succeeded it, and for a second or two the old Grace was looking out of the girl's eyes.

She gasped, she put out her hand and clutched his arm with a force that made him wince.

"Donald! Donald! What is it? Where am I?" she moaned.

He sprang toward her, caught her in his arms. "Grace, darling Grace—Oh thank God!" he cried. "Trust me, darling!"

For a moment she lay passive in his arms, her face upturned, her eyes staring into his in wonder, in trust, in love. And then the moment passed. The hard look came into her eyes again. She detached herself from his embrace and tapped his cheek lightly with her palm.

"Naughty boy!" she said, tittering. "What do you suppose Maurus would say if he caught his friend Donald Blades trying to kiss his fiancée? But all you men are the same. You can't trust a man, can you? But of course I'm not really angry at you, Donald, because you're such an old friend that—that you really may kiss me if you want to."

THE girl realized Donald's dismay, and it only seemed to increase the mockery of her arch glances. Donald did not know afterward what he would have done, but at that moment heavy steps sounded outside, and there came a tap at the door.

"Come in, dear!" cried Grace, bounding lightly to her feet.

Count Maurus entered. Whatever the vicissitudes of his life at the castle had been, he had now fully recovered his former jauntiness. He stepped in, faultlessly attired, a flower in his buttonhole, and the

look he turned upon Donald was one of mocking triumph.

"Well, Blades—?" he began, with a questioning look from Donald to Grace.

"Oh, Maurus, I've just told Donald our secret," said the girl with a simper. "I thought as he's such an old friend, you wouldn't mind his knowing, darling."

Somehow Donald managed to make his escape from the room without any grave breach of propriety, though his heart felt as if it were bursting. But he had descended only a few of the stone steps when he heard Grace's door close, and the Count outside. Then Maurus called his name.

AS Donald waited he came quickly down to him.

"Well, Blades, all's fair in love and war. That's one of your English adages, I believe."

"You damned scoundrel!" said Donald.

Count Maurus stepped back quickly, as if he feared a blow. "Really, my dear Blades, that is rather strong language to use to a man who has been lucky enough to be your successful rival," he retorted.

"I take it," said Donald, "that you didn't come here to bandy words with me. Usually your words and actions have a definite motive, Count Garati."

The Count bowed with suave mockery. "You pay me too much honor, Mr. Blades," he answered. "Yes; while as a man I may feel a certain amount of pardonable elation, my motive in addressing you is not a complex one."

"Blades"—Count Maurus came back a step, and his face assumed an expression of ugly malice, "you will remember that we had a falling out when you came to Schlangenfels to superintend the removal of the castle. You were pleased to assault me with your fists in your brutal American way. I, of the noblest Hungarian family, received the insufferable insult of a blow!"

Count Maurus's face worked with fury at his recollection.

"Which you richly deserved, Count Garati," answered Donald, "so I hardly see the point of bringing up the matter again."

"I'll tell you the point," sneered Count Maurus. "Miss Grace Gordon is my affianced bride. If you think you can pre-



vent the marriage, go to that old fool, Joshua Mellen. See how you stand with him. I tell you she is mine, and Schlagenfels will soon be mine, too, and nothing you can do or say can stop it. Furthermore—the Count seemed to have forgotten his fears of Donald's fists, for he thrust his face within an inch of his—"I advise you to get out of here as quickly as possible, if your life means anything to you!"

"Much obliged for the hints you've thrown out, Count," answered Donald. "I promise you the information won't be wasted."

**I**T was clear to Donald that his only hope lay in Masters. Unless the psychiatrist could solve this new situation, he would have to take some desperate measure.

Going straight up to Masters's room, Donald immediately derived the impression that the doctor was expecting him. The doctor laid aside the book he was studying, got up, and greeted Donald with outstretched hand.

Donald looked curiously about him, at the scientific apparatus, at the shelves of books, then into Masters's face, which wore a quizzical smile.

"Getting pretty tired of it all, Blades?" asked the doctor.

"'Tired' hardly does justice to my feelings," answered Donald. "I'm sick to death of it all. Of course you've realized that Mr. Mellen is not playing a game with that pair of beauties—he's fallen under their spell again?"

Masters nodded, watching the younger man's face keenly.

"Grace, to whom I was practically engaged, has just told me that she has accepted Count Maurus's hand," Donald went on. "God, that might even be bearable! But she's lost her memory! She's insane! It's no use making me think that that girl is Grace Gordon. She's no more Grace Gordon than—than Bridget is!"

"I know it," answered Masters impatiently.

"But what's to be done? Things can't go on this way. They're getting worse every minute. She'll marry him, and those two crooks will get possession of the castle, and murder Mr. Mellen, and——"

"Let's go slow," said Masters. "They haven't done it yet."

"But nothing's been cleared up—how Mr. Mellen got into the *oubliette*, for example. Have you any idea?"

"I'm beginning to get one, Blades. But please remember that it all hangs together, and we can't be precipitate without risking a disaster."

"How do you suppose Mellen got into the *oubliette*?" persisted Donald.

"My dear Blades, if I were to tell you, I'm afraid you'd think me crazy too," said Masters.

"Tell me your theory—never mind what I think about you."

"I think," said Masters slowly, "that he swam there."

"Swam—into the *oubliette*? But there's no water——"

"Swam through the earth. As the mole and the earthworm swim," said Doctor Masters.

He waved Donald to a chair. "Before I explain," he said, "suppose you let me have your own views, Blades."

"Why, it's all fairly clear to me," answered Donald. "A gang of crooks is under the impression that there exist valuable treasures in Schlagenfels. They are bent upon scaring everybody out of it, so that they can ransack the place. I imagine that the organization is a large one, and that certain crooks have played false to their comrades, in the manner of crooks."

"That man who first rifled Mr. Mellen's safe, for example. Well, he was caught on the job and killed. Probably there's a sort of internal war among the members of this organization. That accounts for pretty nearly everything."

**A**ND you believe Count Maurus and Bantry are at the head of this criminal organization?" asked Masters.

"I'm practically sure of it. I'll even go so far as to suggest that, though I was personally responsible for removing Schlagenfels here, stone by stone, nevertheless there may be treasures stowed away somewhere, and that Count Maurus has organized this gang to secure them."

"And how," asked Masters, "do you account for the fact that Tim and Bridget recognized the engravings of Count Marco Garati's wife, Maria, and his sister, Vera?"

"Imagination," answered Donald. "They would have recognized any portraits of women in old-fashioned dresses as the originals of the imaginary apparitions."

"And why did they imagine that they saw these women in the old-fashioned dresses, in the first place?"

"That's not difficult to answer," replied

Donald. "Two miles or so down the road there is a large amusement park. No doubt a couple of performers were among the crowds that used to visit this place, and they came in their costumes. That worked on the servants' imaginations."

"I see," answered Masters. "I am interested in your opinion, Blades, because, however much we may differ, you and I will have to work together to rid Schlangufels of this pest, and restore Miss Gordon to herself."

"You mean you differ from me?" asked Donald.

"I BELIEVE," answered Masters, assuming a judicial manner, "that these disturbances have a mixed origin. I believe with you that a band of crooks is at work, but I believe also that we are in the presence of one of those inexplicable horrors that pass down through the centuries, losing none of their strength in doing so, but increasing their power. I believe that unless we can destroy this thing, it will destroy us."

"I believe that the puny efforts of the crooks may be disregarded. I believe that those at their head, and, in particular, Count Maurus Garati, are aware of the existence of this supernatural force, are underestimating its terrific potentialities, are attempting to use it for their own ends, when it can sweep them out of existence. Blades, whether you attribute a natural or a supernatural origin to them, the fact remains that there are things in nature so terrible that it is a providence their existence has remained generally unknown."

"But what is this force?" asked Donald.

"It is the power over matter assumed, often unconsciously, by those who are neither dead nor living, and consequently, being on the borderline between two states, are able to control both matter and ether."

"Count Marco Garati, his wife and sister were burned centuries ago, but they never died. By means of their powers of sorcery they had been able to project their etheric bodies while alive. At the moment of death they summoned these forces, and escaped their bodies."

"For centuries they have continued to haunt Schlangufels, seeking the opportunity to continue their former infamies. Half-physical, half-etheric entities, I believe that in this new sphere they are making a grand attempt to regain vital existence, either by drawing upon the inmates of Schlangu-

fels, so as to build up permanent bodies of their own, or else by taking possession of them."

Donald listened in horror. "Then Grace—do you mean that Grace—?" he began.

"I believe that one of these women is striving to take possession of her. And I propose to checkmate that by assisting the evil three to build up bodies of their own. That is why I summoned Bantry back here, for Bantry, without actually believing it, is a powerful medium. He thinks he is a faker, as many of them do. I have reasons for believing differently."

"So you see, Blades, things must get worse before they grow better. Unless we we can persuade the entity that has taken possession of Miss Gordon to leave her and appear in human form, she will never be cured."

"What did you mean when you said that Mr. Mellen swam into the *oubliette* through the earth?" asked Donald.

"I meant," said Masters, "that I believe he was partly dematerialized by one of these entities, and conveyed there. Probably he had in some way laid himself open to attack."

Donald, listening to Masters, had felt a thrill of horror pass through him. While Masters spoke, his voice, his sincerity seemed to carry complete conviction. Incredible as the doctor's hypothesis was, Donald believed.

But a moment later the reaction came. Masters must himself be crazy, Donald thought. It looked as if it was going to devolve upon himself to run down the gang of crooks that had fastened themselves upon the castle.

Then Donald saw that the doctor's eyes were fixed quizzically upon his own.

"Still skeptical, Blades?" he asked.

"WHAT you have told me sounds incredible," Donald admitted. "It goes contrary to everything I've known."

"Well," resumed Masters, "there is no reason why we two should not continue to work together, I from my point of view, and you from yours. We must, Blades," he said solemnly. "The lives of Miss Gordon and her uncle, not to mention yours and mine, depend upon it. And our time is growing short."

"Count Maurus hinted as much to me," said Donald. "He seems to have no doubt of his triumph."

Masters smiled grimly. "We'll see about

that," he replied. "And now, Blades, I mentioned to you my desire to see the crypt, also the *oubliette*. Would you have any objection to accompanying me there now?"

Equipped with the rope that Donald and Tim Rourke had used on the occasion of their previous visit to the crypt, and a more powerful flash-light than before, Donald and Masters entered the chapel and, passing around the altar, fastened the rope to the column and let themselves down into the hole. Masters stopped in front of the row of coffins.

"Better to have left these coffins where they belonged, instead of removing them. Did any of them appear heavier than the others when they were removed?"

Donald was startled. "Why, three of them could not be stirred for some time," he answered, "and then suddenly they seemed to grow light. What makes you ask that?"

Masters, ignoring his question, suggested that Donald lead the way to the *oubliette*. Donald took the torch and conducted Masters to the slab. Then he uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"What's the matter?" demanded the doctor.

"**T**HAT slab—it took all Tim's efforts and mine to remove it, and we made no attempt to replace it. I can swear to that. Yet somebody has replaced it!"

And he pointed to the slab, which was squarely in position over the hole. "I'll have to get Tim help move it again, if you wish to look down," he suggested.

"It's not necessary, I think. Just give me a hand, will you, Blades?" answered Masters.

The doctor had certainly looked a powerful man, but Donald had had no idea of the power of his muscles until he saw him lift the slab. Almost alone, and apparently with very little effort, he turned it over on its side.

Next moment a cry of horror broke from Donald's lips. So unexpected was the dénouement that he would have turned and fled shamelessly but for Masters's

steadying grip upon his arm.

"It's all right, it's all right, Blades," came the doctor's voice.

And letting Masters take the flash from his hand, Donald nerved himself to look at the horrible spectacle that met his eyes.

As a jack-in-a-box leaps up when the box cover is removed, a ghastly head and shoulders revealed themselves above the hole of the *oubliette*!

The head of a dead man! The hideous face peered out beneath matted hair. How long the man had been dead, there was no immediate telling. Apparently, though, the head was mummified. The eyes, like balls of glass, seemed to fix themselves upon Donald's face. And in spite of the mummification, the features were readily distinguishable as those of some denizen of the underworld.

Almost imperceptibly, the body became elongated. More and more of it was appearing out of the hole of the *oubliette*. Shrivelled hands came into view, with something clutched tight in the bony fingers. In the circle of the flash-light Donald recognized what it was—the chief blue-print of his stolen plans for the restoration of certain parts of the castle.

"That's the crook who opened the safe the last time!" Donald shouted. And, despite Masters's cry of warning, he sprang forward and snatched at the print in the mummified hands.

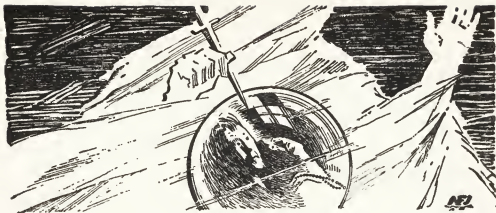
But the body had begun to bob up and down like a cork on water, and Donald's leap failed. To save himself, he was forced to fling his arms about the dead man and cling to him.

Then, almost instantaneously, the body collapsed and dropped back into the hole, carrying Donald with it toward the black recesses of the *oubliette*.

He shouted, released his grasp, flung up his arms wildly, and succeeded in clinging to the edge of the hole, while the hideous mummy, gyrating slowly, sank out of sight beneath him.

But suddenly everything grew black, stark unconsciousness descended upon him, and Donald uttered a despairing cry as he felt himself slipping into the depths below.

*The evil influences still at work, what possible method can be employed to counteract them? Uncle Joshua and Grace Gordon seem to lack more than ever the strength to resist them. Donald Blades is puzzled and Dr. Masters has not figured out a way to discover just what is happening at the ancient castle of Schlangenfels. Watch for the next instalment in the March issue of GHOST STORIES. On sale at all news stands February 20th.*



# SPIRIT TALES

*A "Conjure" Case from South Carolina—Stones that Weep—  
Europe's Latest Ghost-laying Society*

By COUNT CAGLIOSTRO

**C**OMPLEMENTARY to "The Conjure Bag" story which appeared in the December issue of this magazine, our readers will be interested in this true account of a case of alleged witchcraft in Anderson County, South Carolina, sent us by Mr. Leon L. Rice, attorney:

It was the fall of the year in Dixie. The fields of cotton were snowy-white with the fleecy staple, and money was more abundant than at any time during the year in the hill country of South Carolina. On a small cotton farm lived Enoch Greer, a thrifty hard-working Negro who by his industry had become the owner of his own farm. With him lived his wife, Ola, who was afflicted with an incurable disease from which she had sought relief by all manner of healing ointments, patent medicines and ancient remedies.

In the midst of the harvesting season, a white woman came to the field and called to Enoch. She told him her name was Madam Salena and that she was a divine healer. She said: "You think your wife is sick, but she is not; she is only being tricked."

By the word "tricked," Enoch and Ola understood that she meant "conjured," or that some spell had been put upon them

by burying some mysterious "conjure bag" in or near the house. Ola asked her if she could find it, and Madam Salena replied that she could, but that it would cost twenty dollars to remove it.

Ola promptly offered to pay the sum if she would remove it, and Madam Salena called for some salt, red pepper, and sand. With certain ceremonials, she went outside and called for a pick, a shovel and a fork. She then walked to a point in the yard near the chimney and made a round mark with the fork and said, "There it is!" She sprinkled some water and salt and pepper on the ground and ordered the digging to proceed.

As they dug, she would stop them and pour water and sprinkle salt and pepper upon the ground, and with the fork stir the mud apparently in search of the mysterious object that was thought to be the cause of all the trouble.

Finally she cried: "I have found it!" And from the mud she brought forth an old rag with a dingy string tied around it, and calling the Negroes around her she opened the rag. It contained some rusty nails, crepe, screws, wire and a little toy man with his legs folded up to his body, resembling a Billiken.

Madam Salena said, "If it had stayed

here another week it would have killed you all." She then called for a match and a saucer. She poured some powder in the saucer and told Enoch to cut some hair from his wife's head and place it in the mixture. She then put a match to it and several snake-like coils arose from the saucer. Ola screamed. Madam Salena then told Ola that she was full of just such things, but that now she was freed from the spell that bound her. Ola promptly gave her the twenty dollars.

**M**ADAM SALENA told her driver to put the rag and its contents under the hood of her car, as she was afraid to ride with it in the car. The hood was raised and the terrible object placed on the top of the engine, and away she went. But a few days later Madam Salena returned. This time Enoch was the victim of her cunning. She told him that if his wife was to be completely cured it would be necessary for him to wear some money around his waist—the more the money the quicker the cure.

Enoch said that he had not sold any cotton and didn't have much money. She told him to sell some cotton and get the money in twenty-dollar bills, and she would sew it around his waist and start the healing process. To this Enoch agreed and the next day he carried three bales of cotton to town and sold them, and returned with one hundred and forty dollars.

When Madam Salena came again Enoch hesitated to have the money sewed around his waist. She argued that he might lose it if he put it in a bank, and that with it around his own waist it would be safer than any other place he could carry it. After the cure was effected, of course, he could take it off and spend it, or do as he pleased with it.

So Enoch agreed, and she brought forth a small piece of outing and some brown paper. She told him to place the money in the outing, and she folded it up and placed the outing in the brown paper. She then told Enoch to get some water and take off his shoes. During this time she held the paper containing the money in her lap.

Now she told him to take fifty steps barefooted in the direction of the door, and at each step to drop some water on his toes, counting each step. Enoch complied, and after the count of fifty returned to the divine healer. Madam Salena then told him to make three wishes, the first one being that his wife would get well, and two

more that he should keep secret. As he made each wish he was to blow on the paper containing the money. He did so, and Madam Salena took the paper and placed it in a cotton belt that had been prepared for the purpose and sewed it in. Placing it around Enoch's waist, she sewed the ends together and told Enoch not to remove the belt or look in it until the twenty-ninth of November. He was cautioned not to remove it for any purpose lest the cure fail.

Enoch wore the belt continuously for three weeks, during which time Madam Salena returned several times and ate dinner with Enoch's family. She insisted on placing more money around Enoch's waist to hasten the cure. So Enoch agreed to get fifty dollars more, and took another bale of cotton to town and sold it.

On the way back he met Elbert Dawson, another Negro and fellow-wearer-of-the-belt. Madam Salena had scores of patients among the Negroes who had ailments. The two men stopped to converse and learned that each had a belt sewed around his waist.

Dawson told Enoch of the death of a neighbor who had been treated by Madam Salena, and how he too had one of these mysterious belts around his waist when he died. He said the belt was opened and no money was found in it. Further, he suggested that they take a look into their own belts. Enoch hesitated but finally agreed. When they opened their belts the money was gone!

They immediately turned to the law for protection. The sheriff sent two deputies to Enoch's house. Enoch and Dawson waited at the roadside until the deputies came. Madam Salena was talking to Ola when the officers asked her what kind of business she was engaged in. She told them that she was a divine healer.

**D**EPUTY BROWN asked her if she had a license to practice, and she said she had none except from God. Brown told her she would have to stop swindling ignorant Negroes out of their money, and ordered her to return Enoch his one hundred and forty dollars.

She asked if she could go free if she returned their money to both Enoch and Dawson. The deputy said, "No, you are going to jail." Madam Salena then asked if she could go into a private room to get the money from her clothes.

"All right, go ahead," said the deputy.



Ola went into another room with Madam Salena, and in a few minutes she came out and turned over one hundred and five dollars to Enoch, stating that it was one hundred and ten. The deputy counted it. Madam Salena reached in a pocket and handed over the other five-dollar bill. The deputy told Enoch to make her pay all of his money back, but he said this much would satisfy him. Madam Salena looked at Enoch and Ola, and swore that she would get even with them. Enoch was afraid and wanted to return the money, but Deputy Brown would not allow it.

Arriving at the jail, a woman attendant searched Madam Salena and found concealed about her person two hundred and thirteen dollars. They turned over two hundred and ten dollars to the court and allowed her to keep three dollars.

Four warrants charging her with swindling and cheating were taken out before the magistrate and she was left in jail in default of bond until the next term of the criminal court. At the February term she was indicted by the Anderson County grand jury on four indictments, and tried on the one charging her with swindling and defrauding Enoch Greer. The prosecution was conducted by the writer of this story who assisted the solicitor, and throughout the trial Madam Salena pretended to be very deaf.

Madam Salena conducted her own defense and testified in her own behalf, claiming that she should not be convicted on the testimony of four Negroes. She addressed the jury and shed tears, making a rather pitiful appeal to their sympathy and prejudice. The jury returned a verdict of guilty in about fifteen minutes. The judge asked her if she had anything to say before sentence was passed upon her, and she said that she wanted a new trial; that the jury had no right to convict her on the testimony of Negroes. The judge politely refused the motion for a new trial and sentenced her to serve two years in the state penitentiary.

### *Weeping Stones of Fyvie Castle*

**FYVIE CASTLE** is one of the grandest old buildings in Scotland, and is perhaps the subject of more ghostly rumors than any of them. It stands on a gently sloping hill beside the River Ythan in the lowlands of Aberdeenshire, presenting an outline that is graceful, rich and massive,

in these qualities exceeding even the far-famed Glamis Castle, also the scene of a ghostly mystery.

Although the upper part of the castle is only about three hundred and fifty years old, dating from the time of Mary Queen of Scots, the foundations and lower portion are upward of six hundred years old. It is more than six hundred years since Thomas the Rhymer, the famous medieval poet and prophet, put his curse upon it.

**T**HE celebrated Thomas the Rhymer was a native of the parish of Earlstown, Berwickshire. His real name was Sir Thomas Learmont. He lived some time during the period between 1220 and the year 1300, dying toward the latter part of the thirteenth century.

One of the most noted of early Scottish ballads, called "The Trumpeter of Fyvie," relates the legend of this old castle. "The Trumpeter" was Andrew Lammie, who deeply loved the daughter of Tiftie, the miller. Her father was opposed to the courtship. Andrew went away to make his fortune, but soon returned to woo his Annie. The miller and his family were as bitter as ever against Andrew, and they beat the girl cruelly to make her renounce him. This she would not do, however.

When they were kept apart, Andrew used to go to the house-top and blow his trumpet to let Annie know he was thinking of her. Finally Annie died one night after hearing the trumpet for the last time.

When Andrew Lammie learned of the fate of his sweetheart, he quickly went to join her in the other world, according to the ballad.

There are several versions of this ballad and several more or less conflicting legends connected with it. According to one of these, Andrew Lammie declared before his death that his fate was so cruel that even the stones in the road to Fyvie Castle would weep forever over it.

Immediately, the villagers discovered that three large stones were exuding water in an extraordinary manner. The Laird of Fyvie laughed scoffingly at Andrew Lammie's pathetic lament, declaring that it was absurd to say stones could weep.

To support his convictions he ordered the three stones to be dropped into the bottom of a hole in the River Ythan so deep that no one has ever dredged the bottom. One of the stones had been thus disposed of when Thomas the Rhymer, who

was a great magician as well as poet and prophet, heard of the laird's irreverent conduct and interfered.

The magician was greatly angered by the laird's hardness of heart and incredulity over supernatural matters. As a punishment he declared that Fyvie Castle should never pass from father to son until the missing stone was restored.

According to one version of the legend, Thomas the Rhymer spoke these words:

For thy hardness of heart and the  
wrong thou hast done  
Never shall Fyvie pass from father to  
son,  
'Till the third of those stones that so  
sadly weep  
Shall be brought back to thy hall from  
the deep.

The laird was duly impressed by the prophecy and the remaining stones were not carried away. The scoffing nobleman soon had reason to believe in the terrible prophecy, for his only son was killed in the woods by ambushed enemies.

Strange to relate, from that day to this Fyvie Castle has never passed from a male owner to his son! It has descended to brothers, cousins and daughters, but never directly from father to son.

Two of the weeping stones are still preserved at the castle. They still absorb and exude moisture in a mysterious manner. One is built into the castle, while the other is considered the personal property of the owner.

The whereabouts of the third is still a mystery after six centuries.

On one of the turrets there is a startling statue of the trumpeter blowing his horn,

a further proof that there is some basis of fact in this legend.

### *A New Psychic Research Center*

**G**HOST-HUNTING will one day be an exact science. At one time ghost stories were regarded as old wives tales, suitable only for fireside amusement at Christmas. But now the men of science are making a special effort to track down the elusive Mr. Spook—to weigh, analyze and sum up that baffling creature. To this end a new organization has been founded in Geneva, Switzerland, under the direction of some of the most eminent scientific minds in Europe. The name of this body is the *Centre Permanent International de Conférences et de Congrès de Recherches Psychiques* (The Permanent International Center for Psychic Research Lectures and Congresses).

It will be a world center for the study of the supernatural. Here will be carried out, under scientific conditions, a thorough exploration into the Great Unknown.

Europe's most eminent physiologist, Professor Charles Richet, is the president of the new society, and associated with him are Dr. Hans Driesch of Leipzig University, Dr. C. G. Jung of Zurich, and Dr. E. Osty of Paris, who is a renowned psychic investigator. The first congress of the Permanent Psychic Center was held in October, 1930, when a group of eminent scholars, scientists and experts assembled from all parts of the globe. Admission to the congress will be by invitation—a signal honor, as only the élite in the scientific world are admitted. Great attention is being given to the study of scientific instruments for registering supernormal action.

## Prize Winners in "My Own Ghost Story" Contest for August

### FIRST PRIZE \$50

MRS. MARIE DE S. PERRING

445 Main Street Winnipeg, Manchester, Canada

### SECOND PRIZE \$35

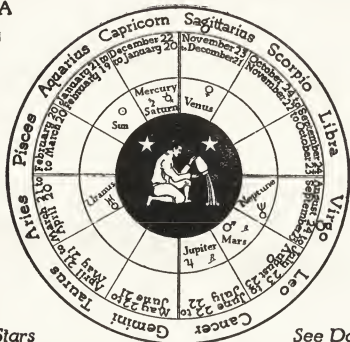
MRS. MARY A. KRUMM  
31 N. Montana Street  
Pasadena, California

### THIRD PRIZE \$15

MISS HELEN JOLY  
208 West 85th Street  
New York City, New York

# Were You Born in February?

By  
STELLA  
KING



*Let the Stars  
Indicate Your Fate*

*See Daily Guide  
for February, Page 110*

**A**QUARIUS, the water-bearer, is perhaps the most interesting of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, partly because it produces the largest percentage of gifted people, and partly because it is the "sign of the Son of Man" mentioned as being in the heavens at the second coming of the Messiah.

Reference is frequently made to the present Uranian Age, but, to be truthful, we do not know when that Age commences. Our solar system moves through space at the approximate rate of fifty seconds a year, passing backwards through one sign—or thirty degrees of space—in 2,160 years. This motion is known as the Precession of the Equinox and the 25,920 years required to complete the circle and pass through 360 degrees constitutes a Great Year of Time.

We have no means of ascertaining just when the sun precessed from one sign to the next, but it is thought that the Taurean—Bronze or Copper—Age commenced

about 4000 B.C., when the Sacred Bull was worshipped. We know that the symbolism of Pisces, the fishes, appears with the advent of Christianity and that the Arian ram, or lamb, is mentioned in the Old Testament.

Knowing that each precessional period consists of 2,160 years, we can say, roughly, that the Taurean period was from 4000 to 2000 B.C., the Arian from 2000 B.C. to the Christian era, and the Piscarian from that time to the present. The Arian period coincided with the discovery and use of iron, which is under the rulership of Mars and Aries, just as copper is under the rule of Venus and Taurus. If these dates are approximately correct, the Aquarian Age will not begin for another hundred years and more, a mere fraction in the great cycles of Time.

If this is so, however, the birth of Christ occurred before the sun actually precessed into Pisces and the Biblical prophecies may also be fulfilled before the Aquarian Age really commences. This new Age may commence with the Millenium; but, before

that, much has still to happen. It is now almost 150 years since the discovery of Uranus, the ruler of Aquarius, and modern inventions and achievements are definitely Uranian in character—the telephone, radio, television, electricity and flying are all distinctly Uranian achievements.

There are other divisions of the Great Year. In the Bible, a "time, times and a half time" is 360 days or years plus two times 360 plus 180 which equals 1,260, and "seven times" is seven times 360 or 2,520, which is two precessional periods. The Great Year is also divided into four periods of 6,480 years—the Gold, Silver, Copper and Iron Ages. The end of the Iron Age is said to come in 2,481 A.D. and if this is to be the end of the present Great Year, it seems logical to suppose that the Aquarian Age—or Millenium—will commence at the same time; moreover, this brings the beginning of the Taurean Age to 3999 B.C., the Arian to 1839 B.C., and the Piscarian or Piscean to 321 A.D. The latter date takes us back to the time of Constantine the Great and to the cessation of Christian persecution.

Christianity was then accepted as the official religion of the Roman Empire. From this it seems reasonable to expect changes destined to lead to the establishment of the New Age before the actual precession into that sign.

The year 1939 was mentioned in the prophecy made to the Lamas of Thibet in 1890 as a definite landmark in world history, and this falls into line with certain planetary cycles, as will be explained in a later article.

**I**N the course of its annual journey through the Zodiac, the sun enters Aquarius on the twenty-first of January, and on the twentieth of February passes into Pisces. Aquarius being associated with the idea of universal brotherhood, those born under its influence are deeply conscious of brotherhood. Friendship means a great deal to them. They are good mixers and pay little attention to social standing or sectarianism. Aquarius is the human sign and symbolizes man's attainment of universal consciousness, which implies unity as distinct from racial divisions, creeds and patriotism—each of which has served its purpose as a step in the ladder of progress.

We cannot expect all Aquarians to live up to this. It would necessitate continual conflict with conditions as they are, but

many of the most enlightened and progressive spirits are born under the guidance of this sign. Statistics prove that a very large proportion of famous people have been Aquarians, born either when the sun was in Aquarius or at an hour when this sign occupied the Eastern horizon. Uranus, the ruler of Aquarius, is the planet of genius, of modernism, originality, and spiritual and artistic intuition or perception—the quality which distinguishes the genius and the creative artist from the rest of us

**U**RANUS is also the ruler of revolution and change. He tears down old-established customs to make way for new and more progressive methods. At the time this article is written, revolutions are in progress in many parts of the world, a condition foreshadowed by the fact that all eclipses from October, 1930, to the end of 1931 fall across the path of Uranus.

This planet is also associated with extreme individualism and egoism—doubtless because it requires a strong individuality to substitute new methods for old habits. This is true in every branch of culture and may be the true explanation of that egoism which so often accompanies great talent.

Until the discovery of Uranus, the planet Saturn was considered ruler of Aquarius, and it is probable that many Aquarians are more influenced by Saturn than by Uranus. It is fairly simple to distinguish the two types.

The Uranian is nervous and spasmodic, talented or eccentric—and sometimes both! This type is restive under control of any nature; he thinks for himself and possesses a fund of innate knowledge that frequently astonishes the bookish student.

The Saturnian type of Aquarian is a strange mixture of would-be independence, indecision, amiability, procrastination and general inefficiency—combined with a genuine kindness of heart which embraces all living creatures.

Between these two extremes are many types, including what we are accustomed to call the "cranks," some of them suffering from extreme independence and egoism without the control necessary to direct their efforts into the right channels, others obsessed with some impossible idea which they discuss continually. If we look far enough below the surface, it becomes apparent that these types are instinctively searching for something which is not as yet clearly defined in their consciousness.

When they realize and clarify this something, they become constructive Aquarians and begin to work consciously towards improved conditions.

If you are an Aquarian, you may not agree with all that has been said, because the probability is that you do not belong to either extreme. The following picture is more like you—kind and tolerant in your judgment, very independent, interested in studying and analyzing character, freer than most people from personal bias, interested in art, science and modern progress, and subject to periods of keen elation when you feel you could almost conquer the world and to dark moods when you simply have to get away by yourself.

**T**RUTH means almost more to you than anything else. You can forgive practically anything so long as the truth is admitted; you hate prevarication. You are a good judge of human nature and have few illusions. You like to have your way and prefer to strike out along a new path rather than follow in anyone else's footsteps.

Famous Aquarians are too numerous to attempt to give a list of them, but one or two outstanding examples of the different types may be of interest. The former German Kaiser is an Aquarian of extreme egotistical type. Edison and Colonel Lindbergh are modern examples of Aquarian leaders. Lincoln and Washington were both Aquarians, as were Columbus, Copernicus, Flammarion, Haeckel, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Dickens. Lloyd George is the politician type of Aquarian.

The United States of America is strongly under the influence of the Uranian ray, as Uranus was rising at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed; Gemini was on the horizon and Aquarius in mid-heaven. It takes Uranus eighty-four years to travel round the Zodiac and, consequently, at the time of the Civil War, this planet was in exactly the same position as in 1776. The next time Uranus will be in this same position will be September, 1943, and it is interesting to speculate as to what changes are then likely to occur. The period 1939-1945 will probably bring many great changes.

In training Aquarian children the chief qualities to be cultivated are decision, tact, efficiency, and punctuality. As Uranus rules the nervous system, diet should be rich in nerve food and the blood stream should be kept free from impurity.

The average Aquarian is not as a rule anxious to marry and settle down early in life—King Boris and the Prince of Wales are both powerfully influenced by this sign. The majority of Aquarians are intensely individual and they weigh carefully the pros and cons both before and after matrimony. The Leos are their opposites and marriage between opposites sometimes results in great and lasting happiness, but I think that in such a partnership Leo would have to be permitted first place.

As Uranus is the higher octave of Mercury—intuitive knowledge and original talent as against intellect and reason—Aquarius and Gemini are affinities on the mental plane and should understand each other. Libra, also an Air sign, provides suitable partners for Aquarius and, as Libra is rather easy-going, those born under her rule probably make the best partners for Aquarians in whom the ego is well developed.

The sapphire is the Aquarian talisman. Sky-blue, azure and silvery white, futuristic designs, plaids, stripes, checks and polka dots, tulips, pansies, yellow primroses, daffodils, clover and oxalis all vibrate in harmony with this sign. Aquarian numbers are 9 and 10. The sign often endows its children with beauty of face and form and breadth of forehead and wide-apart eyes are especially characteristic. The eye-sight is not always good and the eyes should be protected during youthful years. Circulation is apt to be sluggish unless sufficient exercise is taken regularly and is accompanied by correct breathing.

At the present time, the January Aquarians are receiving a barrage of exciting rays from Mars, who is in Leo. The effect of these rays is to increase any tendency to act on impulse and to indulge in reckless excitement. Care should be taken in traffic and in connection with fire or sharp instruments. Other influences are good and the month should be pleasant and successful for the majority of those born at this time of the year.

**A**PRIL Taurans, October Scorpions and July Leos are all under the same high-tensioned rays from Mars and should live prudently and avoid danger. In addition to fire and sharp instruments, Mars rules automobiles and machinery—in fact all things made of iron or steel—and care is necessary in regard to all these.

March Arians and November Sagittas

rians have their radios perfectly tuned-in to these martial rays so that these high-powered vibrations blend harmoniously with their own and give them energy, decision and courage. They should accomplish more than usual with the help of these stimulating influences. Other birthdays which will feel the energizing effect of these rays are those that come during the last week of May or September and the first few days of October.

**N**EPTUNE is still confusing those born about November twenty-eighth, but the rest of the Sagittarians are at present under very good influences: Mars is giving them energy, Venus is watching over their love affairs and social interests, and Uranus is preparing unexpected benefits and at the same time adding the spice of Romance to the Venus influence. It is possible that those born about the fifth of December will make a change in the near future.

Those born on the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth of August or May, or the twenty-fourth of February, are just now under a Neptune cloud. They should be as practical as possible and should avoid the by-paths of life. They should also pay more attention than usual to what they eat, and especially to what they drink. A discordant ray from Neptune is subversive. It undermines reputation and presents opportunities that may be invested with the glamor of romance or financial gain but are destined to end in disaster. In short, an adverse Neptune confuses the judgment and gets one's values all mixed up.

Saturn has moved forward one or two degrees in Capricorn but is still within the radius of the opposition to Jupiter, while Uranus remains in practically the same position. These planets are still in absolute disagreement and indicate the spirit of unrest which dominates the world. If you were born between the sixth and tenth of January and feel low-spirited and lacking in vitality, just make up your mind to take things calmly and as easily as possible until this vibration passes. If you are wise,

you will be careful not to take cold or risk a fall at this time and should there be sickness amongst your friends, it would be better for you not to pay them unnecessary visits. Children need care during the latter part of January and the beginning of February. Others likely to feel this Saturnian vibration are those born between the sixth and tenth of April or July, or the ninth and fifteenth of October. President Hindenberg's planets are so arranged that he is brought very powerfully under these adverse vibrations and also suffers from the effect of the eclipse in October last.

The effect of this eclipse on India is adverse as it fell directly across the Ascendant of the horoscope drawn for the proclamation of annexation in 1858. In this connection, Gandhi's nativity is of interest. He is a Libran by sun-sign with Scorpio rising and his moon is badly afflicted in mid-heaven, which does not promise lasting popularity. Indications are now adverse both for his health and the success of his undertakings; they suggest a critical situation in India in March which culminates in February, 1932.

**T**HE R-101 disaster en route to India is curiously linked to the horoscope of that country by the fact that the airship left Cardington when Mars was in exact opposition to Mars in the Indian horoscope and in conjunction with Uranus in Gandhi's horoscope. A further point of interest is that Gandhi's Uranus is in exact opposition to Mars in the Indian chart, which suggests that his rebellion is against the best interests of that country.

Conditions in South America will probably remain unsettled as the world stage seems to be all set for revolution.

President Hoover escapes the adverse vibrations from Saturn but comes powerfully under the influence of Mars. He will meet with a great deal of opposition during the next few months but, in spite of this, will continue to be a constructive force in the difficult conditions now obtaining throughout the world.



# What the Stars Foretell for Every Day in February

Below are given the planetary indications for February. Let them guide YOU to Success.

1. *Protect yourself from cold and take rest. See friends in evening.*

2. *Occultation of Mars. A busy day. Grasp opportunities. Avoid danger of fire. Full moon.*

3. *Attend to social and artistic matters. Favorable for cooking.*

4. *A good business day. Test the truth of all you hear. Look for bargains.*

5. *Attend to writing and educational matters.*

6. *Adverse. Take up routine work. Avoid risk.*

7. *Concern yourself with ordinary duties. Evening favorable for social and affectional interests, but avoid extremes.*

8. *Favorable for religious activities. Take outdoor exercise if possible.*

9. *Morning favorable for buying and for general business.*

10. *Vibrations give energy. Get things done. Write, travel, do executive and mechanical work. Romance and friendship promised in evening.*

11. *Ask favors, seek publicity and look for employment. Be careful what you say.*

12. *Cook, decorate, make or wear new clothes, buy artistic and colorful fabrics or wearing apparel. Look for romance in evening and seek entertainment.*

13. *Adverse. Be very prudent and take no risk.*

14. *A day of average good fortune.*

*Avoid any excitement and risk in evening.*

15. *Favors oratory. Hear some good speaker.*

16. *A day of sociability and friendly contacts. Much may be accomplished in a pleasant way.*

17. *New moon. Avoid friction and misunderstanding. Disappointment possible.*

18. *Business good, values increase. Sell or buy to sell again. Beautify the home, listen to music, wear new clothes, cook dainties. Visit elderly relatives.*

19. *Control nervous excitement.*

20. *Attend to matters requiring initiative, energy and intuition. Favorable for writing and invention.*

21. *Occultation of Uranus. Be prepared for the unexpected. Favorable for writing and general trading in morning.*

22. *Avoid speed and risk. Ask favors in evening. Good for psychic work.*

23. *Attend to important matters in morning. Adverse for finance.*

24. *Friction and disappointment possible. Do routine work.*

25. *Adverse.*

26. *Conditions improve. Begin new work and undertakings. Favorable for invention.*

27. *Do not accept face values. Seek temporary employment.*

28. *Adverse. Avoid all risk. Keep your temper.*





**R**EADERS are invited to send brief accounts of personal experiences with the occult to *The Meeting Place*. The correspondent's full name and address must be signed to each letter but we will print only the initials or pseudonym if it is requested. No payment will be made for these contributions.

Here is a chance to get in touch with persons all over the world who are interested in the supernatural!

## ~~~~~ *Vision of the R-101*

**I**T IS hard for me to write this letter to you for I know very well that, to begin with, many people will smile unbelievably. However, I did dream, or saw all this in a way I cannot explain exactly.

I was lost in a funny little town that I had never seen before. I walked and walked. I got nowhere. A clock caught my eye. It pointed to two o'clock, and it was that hour of the morning.

Then a humming sound came to me. I looked up, and there was a big black mass going over me in the sky. The motors of the airship sounded to me as if they were skipping, and the plane or whatever it was sagged downward.

Next morning I was afraid to tell my folks about the experience, but the following night I dreamed the same thing again. But this time the clock I saw pointed to two-forty-five in the morning. And I saw that the flying object was a big blimp. Again the motor chugged unevenly.

Quite unexpectedly, there was an awful explosion. I saw that the big blimp was a mass of smoke, and flames were shooting out of it. I ran as fast as I could for help, but everyone I met spoke a language I did not understand. Then a man's body came hurtling through the air, almost

on top of me. I tried to stanch his blood, but my efforts did no good.

But he spoke my own language, and was trying to tell me something—a message to some one. Before he could utter more than three words he was dead. Again I ran and ran.

Waking up the next morning, I found I had lost the use of my legs, and I had to stay in bed for a week.

My husband thought I was foolish to connect my dream with my loss of motion, and he even laughed a little. But he did not laugh when he brought in the morning paper. Instead, he yelled: "Your dream is out! Your dream is out!"

The *Boston Post* had an account in it of the awful disaster which overtook the R-101. What was the connection of my dream with it?

ALICE GUILFEE FEOLA.

Providence, R. I.

## *Dancing Lights*

**U**SUALLY, I think haunted houses are the bunk, if I may be permitted the expression, but something has happened in my town that has set me thinking seriously about the possibilities of our after-life.

The other night, together with about five hundred other persons, I stood outside a

house not far from where I live and watched a strange blue-white phosphorescent light dance through its empty rooms.

It was about half-past ten, and for an hour or more the crowd surged and shouted, with the police trying to maintain order.

The next day the paper declared that official investigators had discovered that the spooky show was caused by a reflection of lights from a house next door. But that can't be true, for I noticed that the houses were pitch black on either side of the haunted one.

Furthermore, I have stood outside the place alone, as late as two in the morning, and seen the same mysterious dancing lights. And one morning about six, in the daylight, I saw strange billowings of smoke in the rooms.

Nothing of a tragic nature has ever happened in that house, so far as anyone knows. What can be the explanation, I wonder, and I am passing along this question to your readers to see what they think.

M. D. W.

Lima, Ohio.

### *A Mystic Journey*

ON PAGE 105 of the November issue of GHOST STORIES appears a true experience entitled, "An Ohio Business Man Takes a Ghostly Journey," which is practically a counterpart of what I had happen to me a number of years ago.

I was about twenty at the time. I was sleeping with my younger brother (since passed on), and I heard an organ playing as it is sometimes played before church service. My brother could not hear it, though there seemed to be hundreds of voices that suddenly began singing "Abide With Me."

Since then I have heard various hymns, and always when I am fatigued or restless. A few years ago, I had a restless night with very little sleep, and I thought perhaps something unpleasant was going to happen. Often, it follows. But nothing disagreeable happened. Quite the reverse. For the next night I had my first astral journey.

I distinctly remember somebody taking my arm in a viselike grip and repeating in a monotone: "Be not afraid." I tried to turn around to see who it was that held me, but I could not move.

Then came the curious sensation of going up as if I was in an express elevator.

Almost instantly, I was on a broad avenue. Still I was not permitted to look behind.

My unseen companion and I walked down the most beautiful boulevard I have ever seen. There were wonderful trees on it of a variety unknown to earth, so far as I know. Homes were on either side of the highway—white houses that looked like marble.

Finally my guide stopped and piloted me up through a lovely garden, and in one corner of it I saw an oddly shaped summer-house, from which emerged my grandmother and grandfather. Both welcomed me effusively.

We talked of things that had happened which we all remembered, and after a while they told me that before I left they wanted me to visit Lily, Charles and Vinnie—relatives that had also passed on.

So we walked along the same splendid boulevard, passed more magnificent houses, and eventually reached the place where my other relations lived. All of them were overjoyed to see me. Incidentally, I passed numerous persons on the street, and all of them appeared supremely happy.

One curious thing was a house under construction. I know it was built in some mysterious manner, but I was told my memory would not retain the secret when I returned to earth again. This proved a fact.

Also, I inquired how they existed there in general, and what they ate. Smiles were my answer mostly; but one of them said that the air was vitalized for the nourishment of their souls, and that was all that was necessary.

I did not return the way I came. Instead, I entered a large coach, similar to an old-fashioned stage-coach. Here I was told to lie down. I did, and fell into a sort of coma, during which I was transported to my bed.

The memory of this journey is always with me, fresh and inspiring. You might think it a dream, but I have had hundreds of dreams, and know the difference between them and an actual experience.

MAURICE A. CRAVEN.

Pawtucket, R. I.

### *Do Ghosts Survive Fire?*

FOR three years now I have faithfully read your magazine, and I must say it has opened my eyes to many heretofore un-

seen realities, with the result that I am a happier and—I hope—a better man.

There is one question I would like to ask. Although I have never missed a single thing in the GHOST STORIES, I am sure, I have never seen anything about the question as to whether the ghosts of cremated persons ever return to earth.

Do they? This question I have heard disputed. Some say that fire destroys all connection between earth and the human spirit, that burial in the ground enables the spiritual entity to maintain power of manifestation for centuries, while cremation destroys it.

Also, how about those who have been drowned? I have been led to believe by serious thinkers that water interposes a barrier difficult to overcome on the part of those who have died in it.

I would be very much obliged to have some of The Meeting Place contributors give their opinions, or recommend a book that might treat this interesting but baffling subject.

JOHN SAMUEL K.

San Diego, Calif.

### *Clanging Chains*

A FRIEND of mine tells me that when he went to college several years ago one of his classmates was a Brahmin—a Hindu mentalist—who gave many exhibitions of his powers, performing many feats of thought transference and reading minds through concentration.

At an entertainment he darkened the room and produced a small tree. The scent of orange blossoms was in the air. Every one present examined the tree. All were positive that there were actual oranges on it.

Yet it was all an illusion. He said so himself!

When he left college to go home in a remote part of India, he told one chap: "When I arrive there you will know it."

A number of weeks passed, and the chum to whom he had said this was awakened in the middle of the night by the sound of clanging chains. He investigated the midnight noise, questioned his brother who slept in the same room, but the latter declared he had heard nothing.

Not long afterwards word came from the Hindu, asking whether his friend had heard

the sound of clanging chains. He explained that he had "willed" it to happen when he arrived home in India.

Was it hypnotism, or was it the projection of the astral self of the Brahmin that was responsible for the "noise"?

H. G. ROSENBERGH,

Philadelphia, Pa.

### *What Do You Think?*

THE first of my strange experiences in leaving my earthly body and going in spirit form to other places came when I was eighteen years old. I used to lie for hours and concentrate to bring a certain person to me. After a few weeks, I got results. I began to feel as if I was drifting in a boat—even yet I still get the vision of the huge columns which I passed in those queer floating experiences.

However, I always pulled myself back at the critical moment, until one morning I saw a grayish mist forming at the other side of the room and as it slowly approached me it took shape and turned into the face of the person I wished to see. The face was wreathed in a horrible smile, and to me it looked positively fiendish.

I tried to call out for help, but I could not. My body was paralyzed with fear. When it came within two or three inches of my face it disappeared.

The second occurrence was about four years ago. I was with some friends. The conversation turned to Canada. One of the company said quite casually that he had seen Niagara Falls. For two or three moments I actually saw the falls. Four years later I stood in the very spot of that sudden flash of second-sight, or whatever it was.

Another strange thing happened one morning after I had just risen. I remember getting up and walking through the house, then turning around and retracing my steps. Half an hour later, I sat up in bed very much surprised, as I thought I was up and dressed.

What makes it all the more curious is that those in the house told me they had heard my footsteps distinctly, but nobody saw me!

I often wonder about these queer experiences.

S. S.

Hamilton, Canada.

"SHE CAN'T PLAY A NOTE"



## 'This'll be Funny' they shouted as she sat down to play — but a minute later...

"I GUESS we're stuck right here in the cluh for the afternoon," sighed Jane, as the rain began coming down in torrents.

"I suppose this means more bridge, and I'm tired of that," said John Thompson. "Can't we find something unusual to do?"

"Well, here comes Sally Barrow. She might offer some solution to the problem," suggested Jimmy Parsons, with a laugh.

Poor Sally! Unfortunately she was considerably overweight. Nevertheless the boys all liked Sally—she was so jolly and full of fun.

"Hello everybody," came Sally's cheery greeting. "What's new?"

"That's just it, Sally, we've just about reached the end of our rope," replied John.

"Would it surprise you if I played a tune or two for you on the piano?"

"You play, Sally? Don't be funny!" The very idea of Sally having talent in any direction struck everybody as a joke. Sally was good-natured though. She didn't mind being laughed at—as long as John Thompson didn't join in the laughter. Sally liked John—more than she cared to admit.

Sally walked nonchalantly over to the piano. Carelessly, she played a few chords. At this, everyone suddenly stopped laughing and turned to watch Sally. Then just as if she had been playing for years, Sally broke into the latest Broadway hit. Her listeners couldn't believe their ears! Sally continued to play one lively tune after another. Some danced while others gathered around the piano and sang.

Finally she finished and rose from the piano. John Thompson was at her side immediately brimming over with curiosity.

"Where did you learn? Who was your teacher?" John asked.

### Sally's Secret

"You may laugh when I tell you," Sally explained, "But I learned to play at home, without a teacher.

You see, I happened to see a U. S. School of Music advertisement. It offered a Free Demonstration Lesson so I wrote for it. When it came and I saw how easy it all was, I sent for the complete course. What pleased me most was that I was playing simple tunes by note right from the start. Why, it was just as simple as A-B-C to follow the clear print and picture illustrations that came with the lessons. Now I can

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say and form your own opinion. The originals of these letters are in my files and I'll gladly furnish you correct names and addresses if you want them.

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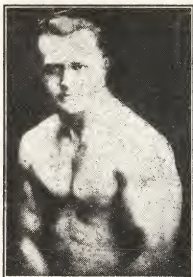
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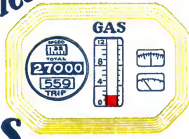
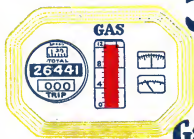
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